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THE LADY OR THE TIGER

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

FRANK R. STOCKTON

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
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1907

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE LADY OR THE TIGER?	3
THE DISCOURAGER OF HESITANCY	15
THE TRANSFERRED GHOST	27
THE SPECTRAL MORTGAGE	47
EVERY MAN HIS OWN LETTER-WRITER	73
THAT SAME OLD COON	83
OUR STORY	109
DERELICT	129
ON THE TRAINING OF PARENTS	185
A BORROWED MONTH	199
THE BAKER OF BARNBURY	247
THE WATCHMAKER'S WIFE	259

22137

ILLUSTRATIONS

Without the slightest hesitation he went to the door on the right, and opened it . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

As the indication became stronger, I thought it right to take Miss Vancouver's hand 120

I had discovered that he was a reformer 202

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THE LADY OR THE TIGER?

THE LADY OR THE TIGER?

IN the very olden time, there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric. He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing, and when he and himself agreed upon anything, the thing was done. When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight, and crush down uneven places.

Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semified was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and beastly valor, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.

But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhap-

sodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast amphitheatre, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished, or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance.

When a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance to interest the king, public notice was given that on an appointed day the fate of the accused person would be decided in the king's arena—a structure which well deserved its name; for, although its form and plan were borrowed from afar, its purpose emanated solely from the brain of this man, who, every barleycorn a king, knew no tradition to which he owed more allegiance than pleased his fancy, and who ingrafted on every adopted form of human thought and action the rich growth of his barbaric idealism.

When all the people had assembled in the galleries, and the king, surrounded by his court, sat high up on his throne of royal state on one side of the arena, he gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheatre. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open either door he pleased. He was subject to no guidance or influence but that of the aforementioned impartial and incorruptible

chance. If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the fiercest and most cruel that could be procured, which immediately sprang upon him, and tore him to pieces, as a punishment for his guilt. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate.

But if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his Majesty could select among his fair subjects; and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence. It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection. The king allowed no such subordinate arrangements to interfere with his great scheme of retribution and reward. The exercises, as in the other instance, took place immediately, and in the arena. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers, and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure, advanced to where the pair stood side by side, and the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home.

This was the king's semibarbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady. He opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether, in the next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal were not only fair—they were positively determinate. The accused person was instantly punished if he found himself guilty, and if innocent he was rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the judgments of the king's arena.

The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?

This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom,

and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until, one day, the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the premises. The youth was immediately cast into prison, and a day was appointed for his trial in the king's arena. This, of course, was an especially important occasion, and his Majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of this trial. Never before had such a case occurred—never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king. In after years such things became commonplace enough, but then they were, in no slight degree, novel and startling.

The tiger cages of the kingdom were searched for the most savage and relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena, and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were carefully surveyed by competent judges, in order that the young man might have a fitting bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else thought of denying the fact. But the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of, and the king would take an æsthetic pleasure in watching the course of events which

would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess.

The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena, while crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors—those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity!

All was ready. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened, and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

As the youth advanced into the arena, he turned, as the custom was, to bow to the king. But he did not think at all of that royal personage; his eyes were fixed upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. Had it not been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady would not have been there. But her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the decree had gone forth that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena, she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event and the various subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done—she

had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms behind those doors stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them. But gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

Not only did she know in which room stood the lady, ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together. It was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space. It may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess, and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door.

When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there paler and whiter than

any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king. The only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery, and the moment he looked upon her he saw she had succeeded.

Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question, "Which?" It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; it must be answered in another.

Her right arm lay on the cushioned parapet before her. She raised her hand, and made a slight, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena.

He turned, and with a firm and rapid step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it.

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

The more we reflect upon this question, the harder

it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?

How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror and covered her face with her hands as she thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger!

But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! How in her grievous reveries had she gnashed her teeth and torn her hair when she saw his start of rapturous delight as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned!

Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity?

And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!

Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she had moved her hand to the right.

The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set up myself as the one person able to answer it. So I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door—the lady or the tiger?

THE DISCOURAGER OF HESITANCY

A CONTINUATION OF "THE LADY OR THE TIGER?"

THE DISCOURAGER OF HESITANCY

A CONTINUATION OF "THE LADY OR THE TIGER?"

IT was nearly a year after the occurrence of that event in the arena of the semi-barbaric king, known as the incident of the lady or the tiger, that there came to the palace of this monarch a deputation of five strangers from a far country. These men, of venerable and dignified aspect and demeanor, were received by a high officer of the court, and to him they made known their errand.

"Most noble officer," said the speaker of the deputation, "it so happened that one of our countrymen was present here, in your capital city, on that momentous occasion when a young man who had dared to aspire to the hand of your king's daughter had been placed in the arena, in the midst of the assembled multitude, and ordered to open one of two doors, not knowing whether a ferocious tiger would spring out upon him, or a beauteous lady would advance, ready to become his bride. Our fellow-citizen who was then present was a man of supersensitive feelings, and at the moment when the youth was

about to open the door he was so fearful lest he should behold a horrible spectacle that his nerves failed him, and he fled precipitately from the arena, and, mounting his camel, rode homeward as fast as he could go.

"We were all very much interested in the story which our countryman told us, and we were extremely sorry that he did not wait to see the end of the affair. We hoped, however, that in a few weeks some traveller from your city would come among us and bring us further news, but up to the day when we left our country no such traveller had arrived. At last it was determined that the only thing to be done was to send a deputation to this country, and to ask the question: 'Which came out of the open door, the lady or the tiger?'"

When the high officer had heard the mission of this most respectable deputation, he led the five strangers into an inner room, where they were seated upon soft cushions, and where he ordered coffee, pipes, sherbet, and other semi-barbaric refreshments to be served to them. Then, taking his seat before them, he thus addressed the visitors:

"Most noble strangers, before answering the question you have come so far to ask, I will relate to you an incident which occurred not very long after that to which you have referred. It is well known in all regions hereabout that our great king is very fond of the presence of beautiful women about his court. All the ladies in waiting upon the queen and royal family are most lovely maidens, brought here from every part of the kingdom. The fame of this concourse of beauty, unequalled in any other royal court, has spread far and wide, and had it not been for the

equally wide-spread fame of the systems of impetuous justice adopted by our king, many foreigners would doubtless have visited our court.

"But not very long ago there arrived here from a distant land a prince of distinguished appearance and undoubted rank. To such an one, of course, a royal audience was granted, and our king met him very graciously, and begged him to make known the object of his visit. Thereupon the prince informed his Royal Highness that, having heard of the superior beauty of the ladies of his court, he had come to ask permission to make one of them his wife.

"When our king heard this bold announcement, his face reddened, he turned uneasily on his throne, and we were all in dread lest some quick words of furious condemnation should leap from out his quivering lips. But by a mighty effort he controlled himself, and after a moment's silence he turned to the prince and said: 'Your request is granted. To-morrow at noon you shall wed one of the fairest damsels of our court.' Then turning to his officers, he said: 'Give orders that everything be prepared for a wedding in this palace at high noon to-morrow. Convey this royal prince to suitable apartments. Send to him tailors, bootmakers, hatters, jewellers, armorers, men of every craft whose services he may need. Whatever he asks, provide. And let all be ready for the ceremony to-morrow.'

"'But, your Majesty,' exclaimed the prince, 'before we make these preparations, I would like—'

"'Say no more!' roared the king. 'My royal orders have been given, and nothing more is needed to be said. You asked a boon. I granted it, and I

will hear no more on the subject. Farewell, my prince, until to-morrow noon.'

"At this the king arose and left the audience-chamber, while the prince was hurried away to the apartments selected for him. Here came to him tailors, hatters, jewellers, and every one who was needed to fit him out in grand attire for the wedding. But the mind of the prince was much troubled and perplexed.

"'I do not understand,' he said to his attendants, 'this precipitancy of action. When am I to see the ladies, that I may choose among them? I wish opportunity, not only to gaze upon their forms and faces, but to become acquainted with their relative intellectual development.'

"'We can tell you nothing,' was the answer. 'What our king thinks right, that will he do. More than this we know not.'

"'His Majesty's notions seem to be very peculiar,' said the prince, 'and, so far as I can see, they do not at all agree with mine.'

"At that moment an attendant whom the prince had not before noticed came and stood beside him. This was a broad-shouldered man of cheery aspect, who carried, its hilt in his right hand, and its broad back resting on his broad arm, an enormous cimeter, the upturned edge of which was keen and bright as any razor. Holding this formidable weapon as tenderly as though it had been a sleeping infant, this man drew closer to the prince and bowed.

"'Who are you?' exclaimed his Highness, starting back at the sight of the frightful weapon.

"'I,' said the other, with a courteous smile, 'am the

Discourager of Hesitancy. When our king makes known his wishes to any one, a subject or visitor, whose disposition in some little points may be supposed not wholly to coincide with that of his Majesty, I am appointed to attend him closely, that, should he think of pausing in the path of obedience to the royal will, he may look at me, and proceed.'

"The prince looked at him, and proceeded to be measured for a coat.

"The tailors and shoemakers and hatters worked all night, and the next morning, when everything was ready, and the hour of noon was drawing nigh, the prince again anxiously inquired of his attendants when he might expect to be introduced to the ladies.

"'The king will attend to that,' they said. 'We know nothing of the matter.'

"'Your Highness,' said the Discourager of Hesitancy, approaching with a courtly bow, 'will observe the excellent quality of this edge.' And drawing a hair from his head, he dropped it upon the upturned edge of his cimeter, upon which it was cut in two at the moment of touching.

"The prince glanced, and turned upon his heel.

"Now came officers to conduct him to the grand hall of the palace, in which the ceremony was to be performed. Here the prince found the king seated on the throne, with his nobles, his courtiers, and his officers standing about him in magnificent array. The prince was led to a position in front of the king, to whom he made obeisance, and then said:

"'Your Majesty, before I proceed further—'

"At this moment an attendant, who had approached with a long scarf of delicate silk, wound it about the

lower part of the prince's face so quickly and adroitly that he was obliged to cease speaking. Then, with wonderful dexterity, the rest of the scarf was wound around the prince's head, so that he was completely blindfolded. Thereupon the attendant quickly made openings in the scarf over the mouth and ears, so that the prince might breathe and hear, and fastening the ends of the scarf securely, he retired.

"The first impulse of the prince was to snatch the silken folds from his head and face, but, as he raised his hands to do so, he heard beside him the voice of the Discourager of Hesitancy, who gently whispered: 'I am here, your Highness.' And, with a shudder, the arms of the prince fell down by his side.

"Now before him he heard the voice of a priest, who had begun the marriage service in use in that semi-barbaric country. At his side he could hear a delicate rustle, which seemed to proceed from fabrics of soft silk. Gently putting forth his hand, he felt folds of such silk close beside him. Then came the voice of the priest requesting him to take the hand of the lady by his side; and reaching forth his right hand, the prince received within it another hand, so small, so soft, so delicately fashioned, and so delightful to the touch, that a thrill went through his being. Then, as was the custom of the country, the priest first asked the lady would she have this man to be her husband; to which the answer gently came, in the sweetest voice he had ever heard: 'I will.'

"Then ran raptures rampant through the prince's blood. The touch, the tone, enchanted him. All the ladies of that court were beautiful, the Discourager

was behind him, and through his parted scarf he boldly answered: 'Yes, I will.'

"Whereupon the priest pronounced them man and wife.

"Now the prince heard a little bustle about him, the long scarf was rapidly unrolled from his head, and he turned, with a start, to gaze upon his bride. To his utter amazement, there was no one there. He stood alone. Unable on the instant to ask a question or say a word, he gazed blankly about him.

"Then the king arose from his throne, and came down, and took him by the hand.

"'Where is my wife?' gasped the prince.

"'She is here,' said the king, leading him to a curtained doorway at the side of the hall.

"The curtains were drawn aside, and the prince, entering, found himself in a long apartment, near the opposite wall of which stood a line of forty ladies, all dressed in rich attire, and each one apparently more beautiful than the rest.

"Waving his hand toward the line, the king said to the prince: 'There is your bride! Approach, and lead her forth! But remember this: that if you attempt to take away one of the unmarried damsels of our court, your execution shall be instantaneous. Now, delay no longer. Step up and take your bride.'

"The prince, as in a dream, walked slowly along the line of ladies, and then walked slowly back again. Nothing could he see about any one of them to indicate that she was more of a bride than the others. Their dresses were all similar, they all blushed, they all looked up and then looked down. They all had

charming little hands. Not one spoke a word. Not one lifted a finger to make a sign. It was evident that the orders given them had been very strict.

"'Why this delay?' roared the king. 'If I had been married this day to one so fair as the lady who wedded you, I should not wait one second to claim her.'

"The bewildered prince walked again up and down the line. And this time there was a slight change in the countenances of two of the ladies. One of the fairest gently smiled as he passed her. Another, just as beautiful, slightly frowned.

"'Now,' said the prince to himself, 'I am sure that it is one of those two ladies whom I have married. But which? One smiled. And would not any woman smile when she saw, in such a case, her husband coming toward her? Then again, on the other hand, would not any woman frown when she saw her husband come toward her and fail to claim her? Would she not knit her lovely brows? Would she not inwardly say, "It is I! Don't you know it? Don't you feel it? Come!" But if this woman had not been married, would she not frown when she saw the man looking at her? Would she not say inwardly, "Don't stop at me! It is the next but one. It is two ladies above. Go on!" Then again, the one who married me did not see my face. Would she not now smile if she thought me comely? But if I wedded the one who frowned, could she restrain her disapprobation if she did not like me? Smiles invite the approach of true love. A frown is a reproach to a tardy advance. A smile—'

"'Now, hear me!' loudly cried the king. 'In ten

seconds, if you do not take the lady we have given you, she who has just been made your bride shall be your widow.'

"And, as the last word was uttered, the Discourager of Hesitancy stepped close behind the prince and whispered: 'I am here!'

"Now the prince could not hesitate an instant; he stepped forward and took one of the two ladies by the hand.

"Loud rang the bells, loud cheered the people, and the king came forward to congratulate the prince. He had taken his lawful bride.

"Now, then," said the high officer to the deputation of five strangers from a far country, "when you can decide among yourselves which lady the prince chose, the one who smiled or the one who frowned, then will I tell you which came out of the opened door, the lady or the tiger!"

At the latest accounts the five strangers had not yet decided.

THE TRANSFERRED GHOST

THE TRANSFERRED GHOST

THE country residence of Mr. John Hinckman was a delightful place to me, for many reasons. It was the abode of a genial, though somewhat impulsive, hospitality. It had broad, smooth-shaven lawns and towering oaks and elms; there were bosky shades at several points, and not far from the house there was a little rill spanned by a rustic bridge with the bark on; there were fruits and flowers, pleasant people, chess, billiards, rides, walks, and fishing. These were great attractions, but none of them, nor all of them together, would have been sufficient to hold me to the place very long. I had been invited for the trout season, but should probably have finished my visit early in the summer had it not been that upon fair days, when the grass was dry, and the sun was not too hot, and there was but little wind, there strolled beneath the lofty elms, or passed lightly through the bosky shades, the form of my Madeline.

This lady was not, in very truth, my Madeline. She had never given herself to me, nor had I, in any way, acquired possession of her. But, as I considered her possession the only sufficient reason for the continuance of my existence, I called her, in my reveries,

mine. It may have been that I would not have been obliged to confine the use of this possessive pronoun to my reveries had I confessed the state of my feelings to the lady.

But this was an unusually difficult thing to do. Not only did I dread, as almost all lovers dread, taking the step which would in an instant put an end to that delightful season which may be termed the ante-interrogatory period of love, and which might at the same time terminate all intercourse or connection with the object of my passion, but I was also dreadfully afraid of John Hinckman. This gentleman was a good friend of mine, but it would have required a bolder man than I was at that time to ask him for the gift of his niece, who was the head of his household, and, according to his own frequent statement, the main prop of his declining years. Had Madeline acquiesced in my general views on the subject, I might have felt encouraged to open the matter to Mr. Hinckman; but, as I said before, I had never asked her whether or not she would be mine. I thought of these things at all hours of the day and night, particularly the latter.

I was lying awake one night, in the great bed in my spacious chamber, when, by the dim light of the new moon, which partially filled the room, I saw John Hinckman standing by a large chair near the door. I was very much surprised at this, for two reasons: in the first place, my host had never before come into my room, and, in the second place, he had gone from home that morning, and had not expected to return for several days. Therefore it was that I had been able that evening to sit much later than

usual with Madeline on the moonlit porch. The figure was certainly that of John Hinckman in his ordinary dress, but there was a vagueness and indistinctness about it which presently assured me that it was a ghost. Had the good old man been murdered, and had his spirit come to tell me of the deed, and to confide to me the protection of his dear—? My heart fluttered, but I felt that I must speak. "Sir," said I.

"Do you know," interrupted the figure, with a countenance that indicated anxiety, "whether or not Mr. Hinckman will return to-night?"

I thought it well to maintain a calm exterior, and I answered:

"We do not expect him."

"I am glad of that," said he, sinking into the chair by which he stood. "During the two years and a half that I have inhabited this house, that man has never before been away for a single night. You can't imagine the relief it gives me."

As he spoke he stretched out his legs and leaned back in the chair. His form became less vague, and the colors of his garments more distinct and evident, while an expression of gratified relief succeeded to the anxiety of his countenance.

"Two years and a half!" I exclaimed. "I don't understand you."

"It is fully that length of time," said the ghost, since I first came here. Mine is not an ordinary case. But before I say anything more about it, let me ask you again if you are sure Mr. Hinckman will not return to-night."

"I am as sure of it as I can be of anything," I an-

swered. "He left to-day for Bristol, two hundred miles away."

"Then I will go on," said the ghost, "for I am glad to have the opportunity of talking to some one who will listen to me. But if John Hinckman should come in and catch me here, I should be frightened out of my wits."

"This is all very strange," I said, greatly puzzled by what I had heard. "Are you the ghost of Mr. Hinckman?"

This was a bold question, but my mind was so full of other emotions that there seemed to be no room for that of fear.

"Yes, I am his ghost," my companion replied, "and yet I have no right to be. And this is what makes me so uneasy and so much afraid of him. It is a strange story, and, I truly believe, without precedent. Two years and a half ago, John Hinckman was dangerously ill in this very room. At one time he was so far gone that he was really believed to be dead. It was in consequence of too precipitate a report in regard to this matter that I was, at that time, appointed to be his ghost. Imagine my surprise and horror, sir, when, after I had accepted the position and assumed its responsibilities, that old man revived, became convalescent, and eventually regained his usual health. My situation was now one of extreme delicacy and embarrassment. I had no power to return to my original unembodiment, and I had no right to be the ghost of a man who was not dead. I was advised by my friends to quietly maintain my position, and was assured, that, as John Hinckman was an elderly man, it could not be long before I could

rightfully assume the position for which I had been selected. But I tell you, sir," he continued with animation, "the old fellow seems as vigorous as ever, and I have no idea how much longer this annoying state of things will continue. I spend my time trying to get out of that old man's way. I must not leave this house, and he seems to follow me everywhere. I tell you, sir, he haunts me."

"That is truly a queer state of things," I remarked. "But why are you afraid of him? He couldn't hurt you."

"Of course he couldn't," said the ghost. "But his very presence is a shock and terror to me. Imagine, sir, how you would feel if my case were yours."

I could not imagine such a thing at all. I simply shuddered.

"And if one must be a wrongful ghost at all," the apparition continued, "it would be much pleasanter to be the ghost of some man other than John Hinckman. There is in him an irascibility of temper, accompanied by a facility of invective, which is seldom met with; and what would happen if he were to see me, and find out, as I am sure he would, how long and why I had inhabited his house, I can scarcely conceive. I have seen him in his bursts of passion, and although he did not hurt the people he stormed at any more than he would hurt me, they seemed to shrink before him."

All this I knew to be very true. Had it not been for this peculiarity of Mr. Hinckman, I might have been more willing to talk to him about his niece.

"I feel sorry for you," I said, for I really began to have a sympathetic feeling toward this unfortunate

apparition. "Your case is indeed a hard one. It reminds me of those persons who have had doubles; and I suppose a man would often be very angry indeed when he found that there was another being who was personating himself."

"Oh, the cases are not similar at all," said the ghost. "A double, or doppelganger, lives on the earth with a man, and being exactly like him, he makes all sorts of trouble, of course. It is very different with me. I am not here to live with Mr. Hinckman. I am here to take his place. Now, it would make John Hinckman very angry if he knew that. Don't you know it would?"

I assented promptly.

"Now that he is away, I can be easy for a little while," continued the ghost, "and I am so glad to have an opportunity of talking to you. I have frequently come into your room and watched you while you slept, but did not dare to speak to you for fear that if you talked with me Mr. Hinckman would hear you, and come into the room to know why you were talking to yourself."

"But would he not hear you?" I asked.

"Oh, no!" said the other. "There are times when any one may see me, but no one hears me except the person to whom I address myself."

"But why did you wish to speak to me?" I asked.

"Because," replied the ghost, "I like occasionally to talk to people, and especially to some one like yourself, whose mind is so troubled and perturbed that you are not likely to be frightened by a visit from one of us. But I particularly want to ask you to do me a favor. There is every probability, so far as I

81
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an see, that John Hinckman will live a long time, nd my situation is becoming insupportable. My reat object at present is to get myself transferred, nd I think that you may, perhaps, be of use to me."

"Transferred!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean y that?"

"What I mean," said the other, "is this: now that have started on my career, I have got to be the ghost f somebody, and I want to be the ghost of a man vho is really dead."

"I should think that would be easy enough," I said. Opportunities must continually occur."

"Not at all! not at all!" said my companion, uickly. "You have no idea what a rush and press-re there is for situations of this kind. Whenever a acancy occurs, if I may express myself in that way, here are crowds of applications for the ghostship."

"I had no idea that such a state of things existed," said, becoming quite interested in the matter. There ought to be some regular system, or order of recedence, by which you could all take your turns, ke customers in a barber's shop."

"Oh, dear, that would never do at all!" said the ther. "Some of us would have to wait forever. here is always a great rush whenever a good ghost-ip offers itself—while, as you know, there are some ositions that no one would care for. It was in onsequence of my being in too great a hurry on an casion of the kind that I got myself into my present isagreeable predicament, and I have thought that it ight be possible that you would help me out of it. ou might know of a case where an opportunity for ghostship was not generally expected, but which

22137

might present itself at any moment. If you would give me a short notice, I know I could arrange for a transfer."

"What do you mean?" I exclaimed. "Do you want me to commit suicide or to undertake a murder for your benefit?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" said the other, with a vapory smile. "I mean nothing of that kind. To be sure, there are lovers who are watched with considerable interest, such persons having been known, in moments of depression, to offer very desirable ghostships, but I did not think of anything of that kind in connection with you. You were the only person I cared to speak to, and I hoped that you might give me some information that would be of use; and, in return, I shall be very glad to help you in your love affair."

"You seem to know that I have such an affair," I said.

"Oh, yes!" replied the other, with a little yawn. "I could not be here so much as I have been without knowing all about that."

There was something horrible in the idea of Madeline and myself having been watched by a ghost, even, perhaps, when we wandered together in the most delightful and bosky places. But then, this was quite an exceptional ghost, and I could not have the objections to him which would ordinarily arise in regard to beings of his class.

"I must go now," said the ghost, rising, "but I will see you somewhere to-morrow night; and remember—you help me, and I'll help you."

I had doubts the next morning as to the propriety of telling Madeline anything about this interview,

and soon convinced myself that I must keep silent on the subject. If she knew there was a ghost about the house, she would probably leave the place instantly. I did not mention the matter, and so regulated my demeanor that I am quite sure Madeline never suspected what had taken place.

For some time I had wished that Mr. Hinckman would absent himself, for a day at least, from the premises. In such case I thought I might more easily nerve myself up to the point of speaking to Madeline on the subject of our future collateral existence. But now that the opportunity for such speech had really occurred, I did not feel ready to avail myself of it. What would become of me if she refused me?

I had an idea, however, that the lady thought that if I were going to speak at all, this was the time. She must have known that certain sentiments were afloat within me, and she was not unreasonable in her wish to see the matter settled one way or the other. But I did not feel like taking a bold step in the dark. If she wished me to ask her to give herself to me, she ought to offer me some reason to suppose that she would make the gift. If I saw no probability of such generosity, I would prefer that things should remain as they were.

THAT evening I was sitting with Madeline on the moonlit porch. It was nearly ten o'clock, and ever since supper-time I had been working myself up to the point of making an avowal of my sentiments. I had not positively determined to do this, but wished gradually to reach the proper point when, if the prospect looked bright, I might speak. My compan-

ion appeared to understand the situation—at least, I imagined that the nearer I came to a proposal the more she seemed to expect it. It was certainly a very critical and important epoch in my life. If I spoke, I should make myself happy or miserable forever; and if I did not speak, I had every reason to believe that the lady would not give me another chance to do so.

Sitting thus with Madeline, talking a little, and thinking very hard over these momentous matters, I looked up and saw the ghost, not a dozen feet away from us. He was sitting on the railing of the porch, one leg thrown up before him, the other dangling down as he leaned against a post. He was behind Madeline, but almost in front of me, as I sat facing the lady. It was fortunate that Madeline was looking out over the landscape, for I must have appeared very much startled. The ghost had told me that he would see me some time this night, but I did not think he would make his appearance when I was in the company of Madeline. If she should see the spirit of her uncle, I could not answer for the consequences. I made no exclamation, but the ghost evidently saw that I was troubled.

"Don't be afraid," he said; "I shall not let her see me, and she cannot hear me speak unless I address myself to her, which I do not intend to do."

I suppose I looked grateful.

"So you need not trouble yourself about that," the ghost continued. "But it seems to me that you are not getting along very well with your affair. If I were you, I should speak out without waiting any longer. You will never have a better chance. You

are not likely to be interrupted, and, so far as I can judge, the lady seems disposed to listen to you favorably—that is, if she ever intends to do so. There is no knowing when John Hinckman will go away again; certainly not this summer. If I were in your place, I should never dare to make love to Hinckman's niece if he were anywhere about the place. If he should catch any one offering himself to Miss Madeline, he would then be a terrible man to encounter."

I agreed perfectly to all this.

"I cannot bear to think of him!" I ejaculated aloud.

"Think of whom?" asked Madeline, turning quickly toward me.

Here was an awkward situation. The long speech of the ghost, to which Madeline paid no attention, but which I heard with perfect distinctness, had made me forget myself.

It was necessary to explain quickly. Of course, it would not do to admit that it was of her dear uncle that I was speaking, and so I mentioned hastily the first name I thought of.

"Mr. Vilars," I said.

This statement was entirely correct, for I never could bear to think of Mr. Vilars, who was a gentleman who had, at various times, paid much attention to Madeline.

"It is wrong for you to speak in that way of Mr. Vilars," she said. "He is a remarkably well educated and sensible young man, and has very pleasant manners. He expects to be elected to the legislature this fall, and I should not be surprised if he made his mark. He will do well in a legislative body, for

whenever Mr. Vilars has anything to say he knows just how and when to say it."

This was spoken very quietly, and without any show of resentment, which was all very natural, for if Madeline thought at all favorably of me she could not feel displeased that I should have disagreeable emotions in regard to a possible rival. The concluding words contained a hint which I was not slow to understand. I felt very sure that if Mr. Vilars were in my present position he would speak quickly enough.

"I know it is wrong to have such ideas about a person," I said, "but I cannot help it."

The lady did not chide me, and after this she seemed even in a softer mood. As for me, I felt considerably annoyed, for I had not wished to admit that any thought of Mr. Vilars had ever occupied my mind.

"You should not speak aloud that way," said the ghost, "or you may get yourself into trouble. I want to see everything go well with you, because then you may be disposed to help me, especially if I should chance to be of any assistance to you, which I hope I shall be."

I longed to tell him that there was no way in which he could help me so much as by taking his instant departure. To make love to a young lady with a ghost sitting on the railing near by, and that ghost the apparition of a much-dreaded uncle, the very idea of whom in such a position and at such a time made me tremble, was a difficult, if not an impossible, thing to do. But I forbore to speak, although I may have looked my mind.

"I suppose," continued the ghost, "that you have

not heard anything that might be of advantage to me. Of course, I am very anxious to hear, but if you have anything to tell me, I can wait until you are alone. I will come to you to-night in your room, or I will stay here until the lady goes away."

"You need not wait here," I said; "I have nothing at all to say to you."

Madeline sprang to her feet, her face flushed and her eyes ablaze.

"Wait here!" she cried. "What do you suppose I am waiting for? Nothing to say to me, indeed! I should think so! What should you have to say to me?"

"Madeline," I exclaimed, stepping toward her, "let me explain."

But she had gone.

Here was the end of the world for me! I turned fiercely to the ghost.

"Wretched existence!" I cried, "you have ruined everything. You have blackened my whole life! Had it not been for you—"

But here my voice faltered. I could say no more.

"You wrong me," said the ghost. "I have not injured you. I have tried only to encourage and assist you, and it is your own folly that has done this mischief. But do not despair. Such mistakes as these can be explained. Keep up a brave heart. Good-by."

And he vanished from the railing like a bursting soap-bubble.

I went gloomily to bed, but I saw no apparitions that night except those of despair and misery which my wretched thoughts called up. The words I had uttered had sounded to Madeline like the basest insult.

Of course, there was only one interpretation she could put upon them.

As to explaining my ejaculations, that was impossible. I thought the matter over and over again as I lay awake that night, and I determined that I would never tell Madeline the facts of the case. It would be better for me to suffer all my life than for her to know that the ghost of her uncle haunted the house. Mr. Hinckman was away, and if she knew of his ghost she could not be made to believe that he was not dead. She might not survive the shock! No, my heart might bleed, but I would never tell her.

The next day was fine, neither too cool nor too warm. The breezes were gentle, and nature smiled. But there were no walks or rides with Madeline. She seemed to be much engaged during the day, and I saw but little of her. When we met at meals she was polite, but very quiet and reserved. She had evidently determined on a course of conduct, and had resolved to assume that, although I had been very rude to her, she did not understand the import of my words. It would be quite proper, of course, for her not to know what I meant by my expressions of the night before.

I was downcast and wretched, and said but little, and the only bright streak across the black horizon of my woe was the fact that she did not appear to be happy, although she affected an air of unconcern. The moonlit porch was deserted that evening, but wandering about the house, I found Madeline in the library alone. She was reading, but I went in and sat down near her. I felt that, although I could not

so fully, I must in a measure explain my conduct the night before. She listened quietly to a somewhat labored apology I made for the words I had ed.

"I have not the slightest idea what you meant," she id, "but you were very rude."

I earnestly disclaimed any intention of rudeness, d assured her, with a warmth of speech that must ve made some impression upon her, that rudeness her would be an action impossible to me. I said a eat deal upon the subject, and implored her to be- ve that if it were not for a certain obstacle I could eak to her so plainly that she would understand erything.

She was silent for a time, and then she said, rather re kindly, I thought, than she had spoken before: "Is that obstacle in any way connected with my cle?"

"Yes," I answered, after a little hesitation, "it is, a measure, connected with him."

She made no answer to this, and sat looking at her ok, but not reading. From the expression of her e, I thought she was somewhat softened toward me. e knew her uncle as well as I did, and she may ve been thinking that if he were the obstacle that evented my speaking (and there were many ways which he might be that obstacle), my position uld be such a hard one that it would excuse some ldness of speech and eccentricity of manner. I saw, , that the warmth of my partial explanations had l some effect on her, and I began to believe that it ght be a good thing for me to speak my mind with-

out delay. No matter how she should receive my proposition, my relations with her could not be worse than they had been the previous night and day, and there was something in her face which encouraged me to hope that she might forget my foolish exclamations of the evening before if I began to tell her my tale of love.

I drew my chair a little nearer to her, and as I did so the ghost burst into the room from the doorway behind her. I say burst, although no door flew open and he made no noise. He was wildly excited, and waved his arms above his head. The moment I saw him, my heart fell within me. With the entrance of that impertinent apparition, every hope fled from me. I could not speak while he was in the room.

I must have turned pale, and I gazed steadfastly at the ghost, almost without seeing Madeline, who sat between us.

"Do you know," he cried, "that John Hinckman is coming up the hill? He will be here in fifteen minutes, and if you are doing anything in the way of love-making, you had better hurry it up. But this is not what I came to tell you. I have glorious news! At last I am transferred! Not forty minutes ago a Russian nobleman was murdered by the Nihilists. Nobody ever thought of him in connection with an immediate ghostship. My friends instantly applied for the situation for me, and obtained my transfer. I am off before that horrid Hinckman comes up the hill. The moment I reach my new position, I shall put off this hated semblance. Good-by! You can't imagine how glad I am to be, at last, the real ghost of somebody."

"Oh!" I cried, rising to my feet and stretching out my arms in utter wretchedness, "I would to Heaven you were mine!"

"I *am* yours," said Madeline, raising to me her tearful eyes.

THE SPECTRAL MORTGAGE

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TOWARD the close of a beautiful afternoon in early summer I stood on the piazza of the spa-ous country house which was my home. I had just ned, and I gazed with a peculiar comfort and de-ht upon the wide-spreading lawn and the orchards d groves beyond, and then, walking to the other d of the piazza, I looked out toward the broad pas-es, from which a fine drove of cattle were leisurely ning home to be milked, and toward the fields of ain, whose green was beginning already to be ched with yellow. Involuntarily (for, on princi-, I was opposed to such feelings) a pleasant sense possession came over me. It could not be long be-e all this would virtually be mine.

About two years before, I had married the niece of n Hinckman, the owner of this fine estate. He s very old, and could not be expected to survive ch longer, and had willed the property, without erve, to my wife. This, in brief, was the cause of present sense of prospective possession, and al-ugh, as I said, I was principled against the volun-y encouragement of such a sentiment, I could not me myself if the feeling occasionally arose within I had not married my wife for her uncle's

money. Indeed, we had both expected that the mar
riage would result in her being entirely disinherited
His niece was John Hinckman's housekeeper and sol
prop and comfort, and if she left him for me she ex
pected no kindness at his hands. But she had n
left him. To our surprise, her uncle invited us t
live with him, and our relations with him becam
more and more amicable and pleasant, and Mr. Hinck
man had, of late, frequently expressed to me his grea
satisfaction that I had proved to be a man after hi
own heart; that I took an interest in flocks and herd
and crops; that I showed a talent for such pursuits
and that I would continue to give, when he was gone
the same care and attention to the place which it ha
been so long his greatest pleasure to bestow. He wa
old and ill now, and tired of it all, and the fact that
had not proved to be, as he had formerly suppose
me, a mere city gentleman, was a great comfort to h
declining days. We were deeply grieved to think
that the old man must soon die. We would gladly
have kept him with us for years, but if he must go
it was pleasant to know that he and ourselves were s
well satisfied with the arrangements that had bee
made. Think me not cold and heartless, high-minde
reader. For a few moments put yourself in my place

But had you, at that time, put yourself in my plac
on that pleasant piazza, I do not believe you would
have cared to stay there long, for, as I stood gazin
over the fields, I felt a touch upon my shoulder. I
cannot say that I was actually touched, but I experi
enced a feeling which indicated that the individua
who had apparently touched me would have done s
had he been able. I instantly turned, and saw, stand

ing beside me, a tall figure in the uniform of a Russian officer. I started back, but made no sound. I knew what the figure was. It was a spectre—a veritable ghost.

Some years before, this place had been haunted. I knew this well, for I had seen the ghost myself. But before my marriage the spectre had disappeared, and had not been seen since; and I must admit that my satisfaction, when thinking of this estate, without mortgage or encumbrance, was much increased by the thought that even the ghost who used to haunt the house had now departed.

But here he was again. Although in different form and guise, I knew him. It was the same ghost.

"Ah!" I exclaimed. "Is it you, again?"

"So you remember me," said the figure.

"Yes," I answered, "I remember you in the form in which you appeared to me some time ago. Although your aspect is entirely changed, I feel you to be the same ghost that I have met before."

"You are right," said the spectre. "I am glad to see you looking so well and apparently happy. But John Hinckman, I understand, is in very bad health."

"Yes," I said, "he is old and ill. But I hope," I continued, as a cloud of anxiety began to rise within me, "that his expected decease has no connection with any prospects or plans of your own."

"No," said the ghost. "I am perfectly satisfied with my present position. I am off duty during the day, and the difference in time between this country and Russia gives me opportunities of being here in your early evening, and of visiting scenes and localities which are very familiar and agreeable to me."

"Which fact, perhaps, you had counted upon when you first put this uniform on," I remarked.

The ghost smiled.

"I must admit, however," he said, "that I am seeking this position for a friend of mine, and I have reason to believe that he will obtain it."

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "Is it possible that this house is to be haunted by a ghost as soon as the old gentleman expires? Why should this family be tormented in such a horrible way? Everybody who dies does not have a ghost walking about his house."

"Oh, no!" said the spectre. "There are thousands of positions of the kind which are never applied for. But the ghostship here is a very desirable one, and there are many applicants for it. I think you will like my friend, if he gets it."

"Like him!" I groaned.

The idea was horrible to me.

The ghost evidently perceived how deeply I was affected by what he had said, for there was a compassionate expression on his countenance. As I looked at him an idea struck me. If I were to have any ghost at all about the house, I would prefer this one. Could there be such things as duplex ghostships? Since it was day here when it was night in Russia, why could not this spectre serve in both places? It was common enough for a person to fill two situations. The notion seemed feasible to me, and I broached it.

"Thank you," said the ghost. "But the matter cannot be arranged in that way. Night and day are not suitably divided between here and Russia, and, besides, it is necessary for the incumbent of this place

be on duty at all hours. You remember that I me to you by day as well as at night?"

Oh, yes! I remembered that. It was additionally nfortunate that the ghostship here should not be one the limited kind.

"Why is it," I asked, "that a man's own spirit does t attend to these matters? I always thought that s the way the thing was managed."

The ghost shook his head.

"Consider for a moment," he replied, "what chance man's own spirit, without experience and without fluence, would have in a crowd of importunate ap- icants, versed in all the arts, and backed by the in- ience necessary in such a contest. Of course there e cases in which a person becomes his own ghost, t this is because the position is undesirable, and ere is no competition."

"And this newcomer," I exclaimed, in much ouble, "will he take the form of Mr. Hinckman? If y wife should see such an apparition it would kill r."

"The ghost who will haunt this place," said my mpanion, "will not appear in the form of John nckman. I am glad that is so, if it will please you, you are the only man with whom I have ever ld such unrestrained and pleasant intercourse. ood-by!"

And with these words no figure of a Russian officer od before me.

For some minutes I remained motionless, with wncast eyes, a very different man from the one who d just gazed out with such delight over the beauti- landscape. A shadow, not that of night, had fallen

over everything. This fine estate was not to come to us clear and unencumbered, as we thought. It was to be saddled with a horrible lien, a spectral mortgage.

Madeline had gone up-stairs with Pegram. Pegram was our baby. I disliked his appellation with all my heart; but Pegram was a family name on Madeline's side of the house, and she insisted that our babe should bear it. Madeline was very much wrapped up in Pegram, often, I thought, too much so, for there were many times when I should have been very glad of my wife's society, but was obliged to do without it because she was entirely occupied with Pegram. To be sure, my wife's sister was with us, and there was a child's nurse, but, for all that, Madeline was so completely Pegramized that a great many of the hours which I, in my anticipations of matrimonial felicity, had imagined would be passed in the company of my wife, were spent alone, or with the old gentleman, or with Belle.

Belle was a fine girl, to me not so charming and attractive as her sister, but perhaps equally so to some other persons—certainly to one. This was Will Crenshaw, an old school-fellow of mine, then a civil engineer in South America. Will was the declared suitor of Belle, although she had never formally accepted him. But Madeline and myself both strongly favored the match, and felt very anxious that she should do so, and, indeed, were quite certain that when Will should return everything would be made all right. The young engineer was a capital fellow, had excellent prospects, and was my best friend. It was our plan that after their marriage the youthful couple

should live with us. This, of course, would be delightful to both Belle and her sister, and I could desire no better companion than Will. He was not to go to distant countries any more, and who could imagine a pleasanter home than ours would be?

But now here was this dreadful prospect of a household ghost!

A week or so passed by, and John Hinckman was no more. Everything was done for him that respect and affection could dictate, and no one mourned his death more heartily than I. If I could have had my way he would have lived as long as I, myself, remained upon this earth.

When everything about the house had settled down into its accustomed quiet, I began to look out for the coming of the expected ghost. I felt sure that I would be the one to whom he would make his appearance, and with my regret and annoyance at his expected coming was mingled a feeling of curiosity to know in what form he would appear. He was not to come as John Hinckman—that was the only bit of comfort in the whole affair.

But several weeks passed and I saw no ghost, and I began to think that perhaps the aversion I had shown to having such an inmate of my household had had its effect, and I was to be spared the infliction. And now another subject occupied my thoughts.

It was summer, the afternoons were pleasant, and on one of them I asked Belle to take a walk with me. I would have preferred Madeline, but she had excused herself, as she was very busy making what I presumed to be an altar-cloth for Pegram. It turned out to be an afghan for his baby-carriage, but the effect was the

same: she could not go. When I could not have Madeline I liked very well to walk with Belle. She was a pleasant girl, and in these walks I always talked to her of Crenshaw. My desire that she should marry my friend grew stronger daily. But this afternoon Belle hesitated and looked a little confused.

"I am not sure that I shall walk to-day."

"But you have your hat on," I urged. "I supposed you had made ready for a walk."

"No," said she. "I thought I would go somewhere with my book."

"You haven't a book," I said, looking at her hands, one of which held a parasol.

"You are dreadfully exact," she replied, with a little laugh. "I am going into the library to get one." And away she ran.

There was something about this I did not like. I firmly believed she had come down-stairs prepared to take a walk. But she did not want me—that was evident enough. I went off for a long walk, and when I returned supper was ready, but Belle had not appeared.

"She has gone off somewhere with a book," I said. "I'll go and look for her."

I walked down to the bosky grove at the foot of the lawn, and passed through it without seeing any signs of Belle. Soon, however, I caught sight of her light dress in an open space a little distance beyond me. Stepping forward a few paces, I had a full view of her, and my astonishment can be imagined when I saw that she was standing in the shade of a tree, talking to a young man. His back was turned toward me, but I could see from his figure and general air that

he was young. His hat was a little on one side, in his hand he carried a short whip, and he wore a pair of riding-boots. He and Belle were engaged in very earnest conversation, and did not perceive me. I was not only surprised but shocked at the sight. I was quite certain Belle had come here to meet this young man, who, to me, was a total stranger. I did not wish her to know that I had seen her with him, and so I stepped back out of their sight and began to call her. It was not long before I saw her coming toward me, and, as I expected, alone.

"Indeed," she cried, looking at her watch, "I did not know it was so late."

"Have you had a pleasant time with your book?" I asked, as we walked homeward.

"I wasn't reading all the time," she answered.

I asked her no more questions. It was not for me to begin an inquisition into this matter. But that night I told Madeline all about it. The news troubled her much, and, like myself, she was greatly grieved at Belle's evident desire to deceive us. When there was a necessity for it, my wife could completely de-Pegramize herself, and enter with quick and judicious action into the affairs of others.

"I will go with her to-morrow," she said. "If this person comes, I do not intend that she shall meet him alone."

The next afternoon Belle started out again with her book. But she had gone but a few steps when she was joined by Madeline, with hat and parasol, and together they walked into the bosky grove. They returned in very good time for supper, and as we went in to that meal Madeline whispered to me:

"There was nobody there."

"And did she say nothing to you of the young man with whom she was talking yesterday?" I asked, when we were alone, some hours later.

"Not a word," she said, "though I gave her every opportunity. I wonder if you could have been mistaken?"

"I am sure I was not," I replied. "I saw the man as plainly as I see you."

"Then Belle is treating us very badly," she said. "If she desires the company of young men, let her say so, and we will invite them to the house."

I did not altogether agree with this latter remark. I did not care to have Belle know young men. I wanted her to marry Will Crenshaw, and be done with it. But we both agreed not to speak to the young lady on the subject. It was not for us to pry into her secrets, and if anything was to be said she should say it.

Every afternoon Belle went away, as before, with her book. But we did not accompany her, nor allude to her newly acquired love for solitary walks and studies. One afternoon we had callers, and she could not go. That night, after I had gone to sleep, Madeline awoke me with a little shake.

"Listen," she whispered. "Whom is Belle talking to?"

The night was warm, and all our doors and windows were open. Belle's chamber was not far from ours, and we could distinctly hear her speaking in a low tone. She was evidently holding a conversation with some one whose voice we could not hear.

"I'll go in," said Madeline, rising, "and see about this."

"No, no," I whispered. "She is talking to some one outside. Let me go down and speak to him."

I slipped on some clothes and stole quietly down the stairs. I unfastened the back door and went round to the side on which Belle's window opened. No sooner had I reached the corner than I saw, directly under the window, and looking upward, his hat cocked a good deal on one side, and his riding-whip in his hand, the jaunty young fellow with whom I had seen Belle talking.

"Hello!" I cried, and rushed toward him. At the sound of my voice he turned to me, and I saw his face distinctly. He was young and handsome. There was a sort of half-laugh on his countenance, as if he had just been saying something very witty. But he did not wait to finish his remark or to speak to me. There was a large evergreen near him, and stepping quickly behind it, he was lost to my view. I ran around the bush, but could see nothing of him. There was a good deal of shrubbery hereabout, and he was easily able to get away unobserved. I continued the search for about ten minutes, and then, quite sure that the fellow had got away, I returned to the house. Madeline had lighted a lamp, and was calling down-stairs to ask if I had found the man; some of the servants were up, and anxious to know what had happened; Pegram was crying; but in Belle's room all was still. Madeline looked in at the open door, and saw her lying quietly in her bed. No word was spoken, and my wife returned to our room, where we discussed the affair for a long time.

In the morning I determined to give Belle a chance to speak, and at the breakfast-table I said to her:

"I suppose you heard the disturbance last night?"

"Yes," she said quietly. "Did you catch the man?"

"No," I answered, with considerable irritation, "but I wish I had."

"What would you have done if you had caught him?" she asked, as, with unusual slowness and deliberation, she poured some cream upon her oatmeal.

"Done!" I exclaimed. "I don't know what I would have done. But one thing is certain: I would have made him understand that I would have no strangers prowling around my house at night."

Belle colored a little at the last part of this remark, but she made no answer, and the subject was dropped.

This conversation greatly pained both Madeline and myself. It made it quite clear to us that Belle was aware that we knew of her acquaintance with this young man, and that she still determined to say nothing to us, either in the way of confidence or of excuse. She had treated us badly, and we could not help showing it. On her side, Belle was very quiet, and entirely different from the gay girl she had been some time before.

I urged Madeline to go to Belle and speak to her as a sister, but she declined. "No," she said. "I know Belle's spirit, and there would be trouble. If there is to be a quarrel, I shall not begin it."

I was determined to end this unpleasant feeling, which, to me, was almost as bad as a quarrel. If the thing were possible, I would put an end to the young man's visits. I could never have the same opinion of Belle I had had before; but if this impudent fellow could be kept away, and Will Crenshaw should come back and attend to his business as an earnest suitor ought, all might yet be well.

Now, strange to say, I began to long for the ghost whose coming had been promised. I had been considering what means I should take to keep Belle's clandestine visitor away, and had found the question rather a difficult one to settle. I could not shoot the man, and it would indeed be difficult to prevent the meeting of two young persons over whom I had no actual control. But I happened to think that if I could get the aid of the expected ghost the matter would be easy. If it should be as accommodating and obliging as the one who had haunted the house before, it would readily agree to forward the fortunes of the family by assisting in breaking up this unfortunate connection. If it would consent to be present at their interviews the affair was settled. I knew from personal experience that love-making in the presence of a ghost was extremely unpleasant, and in this case I believed it would be impossible.

Every night, after the rest of the household had gone to bed, I wandered about the grounds, examining the porches and the balconies, looking up to the chimneys and the ornaments on top of the house, hoping to see that phantom whose coming I had, a short time before, anticipated with such dissatisfaction and repugnance. If I could even again meet the one who was now serving in Russia, I thought it would answer my purpose as well.

On the third or fourth night after I had begun my nocturnal rounds, I encountered, on a path not very far from the house, the young fellow who had given us so much trouble. My indignation at his impudent reappearance knew no bounds. The moon was somewhat obscured by fleecy clouds, but I could see that

he wore the same jaunty air, his hat was cocked a little more on one side, he stood with his feet quite wide apart, and in his hands, clasped behind him, he held his riding-whip. I stepped quickly toward him.

"Well, sir!" I exclaimed.

He did not seem at all startled.

"How d'ye do?" he said, with a little nod.

"How dare you, sir," I cried, "intrude yourself on my premises? This is the second time I have found you here, and now I want you to understand that you are to get away from here just as fast as you can, and if you are ever caught again anywhere on this estate, I'll have you treated as a trespasser."

"Indeed," said he, "I would be sorry to put you to so much trouble. And now let me say that I have tried to keep out of your way, but since you have proved so determined to make my acquaintance, I thought I might come forward and do the sociable."

"None of your impertinence!" I cried. "What brings you here, anyway?"

"Well," said he, with a little laugh, "if you want to know, I don't mind telling you I came to see Miss Belle."

"You confounded rascal!" I cried, raising my heavy stick. "Get out of my sight, or I will break your head!"

"All right," said he, "break away!"

I did not wish to strike him on the head, but whirling my club around, I aimed a blow at his right leg.

The stick went entirely through both legs! It was the ghost!

Utterly astounded, I started back, and sat down

upon a raised flower-bed against which I had stumbled. I had no strength nor power to speak. I had seen a ghost before, but I was entirely overcome by this amazing development.

"Now I suppose you know who I am," said the spectre, approaching and standing in front of me. "The one who was here before told me that your lady didn't fancy ghosts, and that I had better keep out of sight of both of you, but he didn't say anything about Miss Belle. And by George! sir, it wouldn't have mattered if he had, for if it hadn't been for that charming young lady I shouldn't have been here at all. I am the ghost of Buck Edwards, who was pretty well known in the lower part of this county about seventy years ago. I always had a great eye for the ladies, sir, and when I got a chance to court one I didn't miss it. I did too much courting, however, for I roused up a jealous fellow named Ruggles, and he shot me in a duel early one September morning. Since then I have haunted, from time to time, more than a dozen houses where there were pretty girls."

"Do you mean to say," I asked, now finding strength, "that a spirit would care to come back to this earth to court a girl?"

"Why, what are you thinking of?" exclaimed the phantom of Buck Edwards. "Do you suppose that only old misers and love-lorn maidens want to come back and have a good time? No, sir! Every one of us, who is worth anything, comes if he can get a chance. By George, sir! do you know I courted Miss Belle's grandmother? And a couple of gay young ones we were, too! Nobody ever knew anything of it, and that made it all the livelier."

"Do you intend to stay here and pay attention to my sister-in-law?" I asked anxiously.

"Certainly I do," was the reply. "Didn't I say that is what I came for?"

"Don't you see the mischief you will do?" I asked. "You will probably break off a match between her and a most excellent gentleman whom we all desire—"

"Break off a match!" exclaimed the ghost of Buck Edwards, with a satisfied grin. "How many matches I have broken off! The last thing I ever did, before I went away, was of that sort. She wouldn't marry the gentleman who shot me."

There was evidently no conscience to this spectre.

"If you do not care for that," I said, in considerable anger, "I can tell you that you are causing ill feeling between the young lady and the best friends she has in the world, which may end very disastrously."

"Now, look here, my man," said the ghost, "if you and your wife are really her friends you won't act like fools and make trouble."

I made no answer to this remark, but asserted, with much warmth, that I intended to tell Miss Belle exactly what he was, and so break off the engagement at once.

"If you tell her that she's been walking and talking with the ghost of the fellow who courted her grandmother,—I reckon she could find some of my letters now among the old lady's papers, if she looked for them,—you'd frighten the wits out of her. She'd go crazy. I know girls' natures, sir."

"So do I," I groaned.

"Don't get excited," he said. "Let the girl alone, and everything will be comfortable and pleasant. Good night."

I went to bed, but not to sleep. Here was a terrible situation. A sister-in-law courted by a ghost! Was ever a man called upon to sustain such a trial? And I must sustain it alone. There was no one with whom I could share the secret.

Several times after this I saw this baleful spectre of a young buck of the olden time. He would nod to me with a jocular air, but I did not care to speak to him. One afternoon I went into the house to look for my wife, and, very naturally, I entered the room where Pegram lay in his little bed. The child was asleep, and no one was with him. I stood and gazed contemplatively upon my son. He was a handsome child, and apparently full of noble instincts, and yet I could not help wishing that he were older, or that in some way his conditions were such that it should not be necessary, figuratively speaking, that his mother should continually hover about him. If she could be content with a little less of Pegram and a little more of me, my anticipations of a matrimonial career would be more fully realized.

As these thoughts were passing through my mind I raised my eyes, and on the other side of the little bedstead I saw the wretched ghost of Buck Edwards.

"Fine boy," he said.

My indignation at seeing this impudent existence within the most sacred precincts of my house was boundless.

"You vile interloper!" I cried.

At this moment Madeline entered the room. Pale

and stern, she walked directly to the crib and took up the child. Then she turned to me and said:

"I was standing in the doorway, and saw you looking at my babe. I heard what you said to him. I have suspected it before." Then, with Pegram in her arms, she strode out of the room.

The ghost had vanished as Madeline entered. Filled with rage and bitterness, for my wife had never spoken to me in these tones before, I ran downstairs and rushed out of the house. I walked long and far, my mind filled with doleful thoughts. When I returned to the house I found a note from my wife. It ran thus:

"I have gone to Aunt Hannah's with Pegram, and have taken Belle. I cannot live with one who considers my child a 'vile interloper.'"

As I sat down in my misery, there was one little spark of comfort amid the gloom. She had taken Belle. My first impulse was to follow her into the city and explain everything, but I quickly reflected that if I did this I must tell her of the ghost, and I felt certain that she would never return with Pegram to a haunted house. Must I, in order to regain my wife, give up this beautiful home? For two days I racked my brains and wandered gloomily about.

In one of my dreary rambles I encountered the ghost. "What are you doing here?" I cried. "Miss Belle has gone."

"I know that," the spectre answered, his air expressing all his usual impertinence and swagger, "but she'll come back. When your wife returns, she's bound to bring young miss."

At this, a thought flashed through my mind. If any good would come of it, Belle should never return. Whatever else happened, this insolent ghost of a gay young buck should have no excuse for haunting my house.

"She will never come back while you are here," I cried.

"I don't believe it," it coolly answered.

I made no further assertions on the subject. I had determined what to do, and it was of no use to be angry with a vaporing creature like this. But I might as well get some information out of him.

"Tell me this," I asked: "if, for any reason, you should leave this place and throw up your situation, so to speak, would you have a successor?"

"You needn't think I am going," it said contemptuously. "None of your little tricks on me! But I'll just tell you, for your satisfaction, that if I should take it into my head to cut the place, there would be another ghost here in no time."

"What is it," I cried, stamping my foot, "that causes this house to be so haunted by ghosts, when there are hundreds and thousands of places where such apparitions are never seen?"

"Old fellow," said the spectre, folding its arms and looking at me with half-shut eyes, "it isn't the house that draws the ghosts: it is somebody in it. As long as you are here the place will be haunted. But you needn't mind that. Some houses have rats, some have fever and ague, and some have ghosts. Au revoir." And I was alone.

So, then, the spectral mortgage could never be lifted! With heavy heart and feet I passed through the bosky grove to my once happy home.

I had not been there half an hour when Belle arrived. She had come by the morning train, and had nothing with her but a little hand-bag. I looked at her in astonishment.

"Infatuated girl," I cried, "could you not stay away from here three days?"

"I am glad you said that," she answered, taking a seat, "for now I think I am right in suspecting what was on your mind. I ran away from Madeline to see if I could find out what was at the bottom of this dreadful trouble between you. She told me what you said, and I don't believe you ever used those words to Pegram. Now I want to ask you one question. Had I, in any way, anything to do with this?"

"No," said I, "not directly." Then, emboldened by circumstances, I added: "But that secret visitor or friend of yours had much to do with it."

"I thought that might be so," she answered. "And now, George, I want to tell you something. I am afraid it will shock you very much."

"I have had so much to shock me lately that I can stand almost anything now."

"Well, then, it is this," she said: "that person whom I saw sometimes, and whom you once found under my window, is a ghost."

"Did you know that?" I cried. "I knew it was a ghost, but did not imagine that you had any suspicion of it."

"Why, yes," she answered. "I saw through him almost from the very first. I was a good deal startled and a little frightened when I found it out, but I soon felt that this ghost couldn't do me any harm, and you don't know how amusing it was. I always had a fancy

for ghosts, but I never expected to meet with one like this."

"And so you knew all the time it wasn't a real man!" I exclaimed, still filled with astonishment at what I had heard.

"A real man!" cried Belle, with considerable contempt in her tones. "Do you suppose I would become acquainted in that way with a real man, and let him come under my window and talk to me? I was determined not to tell any of you about it, for I knew you wouldn't approve of it, and would break up the fun some way. Now I wish most heartily that I had spoken of it."

"Yes," I answered, "it might have saved much trouble."

"But oh, George," she continued, "you've no idea how funny it was! Such a ridiculous, self-conceited, old-fashioned ghost of a beau!"

"Yes," said I. "When it was alive it courted your grandmother."

"The impudence!" exclaimed Belle. "To think that it supposed that I imagined it to be a real man! One day, when it was talking to me, it stepped back into a rose-bush, and it stood there ever so long, all mixed up with the roses and leaves!"

"And you knew it all the time?"

These words were spoken in a hollow voice by some one near us. Turning quickly, we saw the ghost of Buck Edwards, but no longer the jaunty spectre we had seen before. His hat was on the back of his head, his knees were turned inward, his shoulders drooped, his head hung, and his arms dangled limp at his sides.

"Yes," said Belle, "I knew it all the time."

The ghost looked at her with a faded, misty eye, and then, instead of vanishing briskly, as was his wont, he began slowly and irresolutely to disappear. First his body faded from view, then his head, leaving his hat and boots. These gradually vanished, and the last thing we saw of the once gay Buck Edwards was a dissolving view of the tip-end of a limp and drooping riding-whip.

"He is gone," said Belle. "We shall never see him again."

"Yes," said I, "he is gone. I think your discovery of his real nature has completely broken up that proud spirit. And now, what is to be done about Madeline?"

"Wasn't it the ghost you called an interloper?" asked Belle.

"Certainly it was," I replied.

"Well, then, go and tell her so," said Belle.

"About the ghost and all?" I exclaimed.

"Certainly," said she.

And together we went to Madeline and I told her all. I found her with her anger gone, and steeped in misery. When I had finished, all Pegramed as she was, she plunged into my arms. I pressed my wife and child closely to my bosom, and we wept with joy.

When Will Crenshaw came home and was told this story, he said it didn't trouble him a bit.

"I'm not afraid of a rival like that," he remarked. "Such a suitor wouldn't stand a ghost of a chance."

"But I can tell you," said Madeline, "that you had better be up and doing on your own account. A girl

like Belle needn't be expected to depend on the chance of a ghost."

Crenshaw heeded her words, and the young couple were married in the fall. The wedding took place in the little church near our house. It was a quiet marriage, and was attended by a strictly family party. At the conclusion of the ceremonies I felt or saw—for I am sure I did not hear—a little sigh quite near me.

I turned, and sitting on the chancel steps I saw the spectre of Buck Edwards. His head was bowed, and his hands, holding his hat and riding-whip, rested carelessly on his knees.

"Bedad, sir!" he exclaimed, "to think of it! If I hadn't cut up as I did I might have married, and have been that girl's grandfather!"

The idea made me smile.

"It can't be remedied now," I answered.

"Such a remark to make at a wedding!" said Madeline, giving me a punch with her reproachful elbow.

EVERY MAN HIS OWN LETTER-WRITER

EVERY MAN HIS OWN LETTER-WRITER

[Mr. Editor: I find, in looking over the various "Complete Letter-writers," where so many persons of limited opportunities find models for their epistolary correspondence, that there are many contingencies incident to our social and domestic life which have not been provided for in any of these books. I therefore send you a few models of letters suitable to various occasions, which I think may be found useful. I have endeavored, as nearly as possible, to preserve the style and diction in use in the ordinary "Letter-writers."

Yours, etc., F. R. S.]

No. 1.

From a little girl living with an unmarried aunt, to her mother, the widow of a Unitarian clergyman, who is engaged as matron of an institution for deaf-mutes in Wyoming Territory.

New Brunswick, New Jersey,
August 12, 1877.

Revered Parent: As the morning sun rose, this day, upon the sixth anniversary both of my birth and of my introduction to one who, though separated

from me by vast and apparently limitless expanses of territory, is not only my maternal parent but my most trustworthy coadjutor in all points of duty, propriety, and social responsibility, I take this opportunity of assuring you of the tender and sympathetic affection I feel for you, and of the earnest solicitude with which I ever regard you. I take pleasure in communicating the intelligence of my admirable physical condition; which most satisfactory condition, I am happy to say, is entirely due to the unremitting efforts of the kind relatives who have me in charge; and hoping that you will continue to preserve the highest degree of health compatible with your age and arduous duties, I am,

Your affectionate and dutiful daughter,

MARIA STANLEY.

No. 2.

From a young gentleman who, having injured the muscles of the back of his neck by striking them, while swimming, on a pane of glass shaken from the window of a fore-and-aft schooner by a severe collision with a wagon loaded with stone which had been upset in a creek, in reply to a cousin by marriage who invites him to invest his savings in a patent machine for the disintegration of mutton suet.

BELLEVILLE HOSPITAL, CENTRE COUNTY, OHIO.
January 12, 1877.

MY RESPECTED COUSIN: The incoherency of your request with my condition [*here state the condition*] is so forcibly impressed upon my sentient faculties

[*enumerate and define the faculties*] that I cannot refrain from endeavoring to avoid any hesitancy in making an effort to produce the same or a similar impression upon your perceptive capabilities. With kindest regards for the several members of your household [*indicate the members*], I am ever,

Your attached relative,

MARTIN JORDAN.

No. 3.

From a superintendent of an iron-foundery, to a lady who refused his hand in her youth, and who has since married an inspector of customs in one of the Southern States, requesting her, in case of her husband's decease, to give him permission to address her, with a view to a matrimonial alliance.

BRIER IRON-MILLS, SECAUQUA, ILLINOIS,
July 7, 1877.

DEAR MADAM: Although I am fully aware of the robust condition of your respected husband's health, and of your tender affection for him and your little ones, I am impelled by a sense of the propriety of providing in time for the casualties and fortuities of the future, to ask of you permission, in case of your (at present unexpected) widowhood, to renew the addresses which were broken off by your marriage to your present estimable consort.

An early answer will oblige,

Yours respectfully,

JOHN PICKETT.

No. 4.

From a cook-maid in the family of a dealer in silver-plated casters, to the principal of a boarding-school, enclosing the miniature of her suitor.

1317 East Seventeenth Street, New York,
July 30, 1877.

Venerated Madam: The unintermittent interest you have perpetually indicated in the direction of my well-being stimulates me to announce my approaching conjugal association with a gentleman fully my peer in all that regards social position or mental aspiration, and, at the same time, to desire of you, in case of the abrupt dissolution of the connection between myself and my present employers, that you will permit me to perform, for a suitable remuneration, the lavatory processes necessary for the habiliments of your pupils.

Your respectful well-wisher,
Susan Maguire.

No. 5.

From a father to his son at school, in answer to a letter asking for an increase of pocket-money.

My dear Joseph: Your letter asking for an augmentation of your pecuniary stipend has been received, together with a communication from your preceptor relative to your demeanor at the seminary.

Permit me to say that, should I ever again peruse an epistle similar to either of these, you may confidently anticipate, on your return to my domicile, an excoriation of the cuticle which will adhere to your memory for a term of years.

Your affectionate father,
HENRY BAILEY.

No. 6.

From the author of a treatise on molecular subdivision, who has been rejected by the daughter of a cascarilla-bark refiner, whose uncle has recently been paid sixty-three dollars for repairing a culvert in Indianapolis, to the tailor of a converted Jew on the eastern shore of Maryland, who has requested the loan of a hypodermic syringe.

WEST ORANGE, January 2, 1877.

DEAR SIR: Were it not for unexpected obstacles, which have most unfortuitously arisen, to a connection which I hoped, at an early date, to announce, but which now may be considered, by the most sanguine observer, as highly improbable, I might have been able to obtain a pecuniary loan from a connection of the parties with whom I had hoped to be connected, which would have enabled me to redeem, from the hands of an hypothecator, the instrument you desire, but which now is as unattainable to you as it is to

Yours most truly,
THOMAS FINLEY.

No. 7.

From an ambassador to Tunis, who has become deaf in his left ear, to the widow of a manufacturer of perforated underclothing, whose second son has never been vaccinated.

TUNIS, AFRICA, August 3, 1877.

MOST HONORED MADAM: Permit me, I most earnestly implore of you, from the burning sands of this only too far distant foreign clime, to call to the notice of your reflective and judicial faculties the fact that there are actions which may be deferred until too recent a period.

With the earnest assurance of my most distinguished regard, I am, most honored and exemplary madam, your obedient servant to command,

L. GRANVILLE TIBBS.

No. 8.

From a hog-and-cattle reporter on a morning paper, who has just had his hair cut by a barber whose father fell off a wire bridge in the early part of 1867, to a gardener, who has written to him that a tortoise-shell cat, belonging to the widow of a stage-manager, has dug up a bed of calceolarias, the seed of which had been sent him by the cashier of a monkey-wrench factory, which had been set on fire by a one-armed tramp, whose mother had been a sempstress in the family of a Hicksite Quaker.

NEW YORK, January 2, 1877.

DEAR SIR: In an immense metropolis like this, where scenes of woe and sorrow meet my pitying eye

at every glance, and where the living creatures, the observation and consideration of which give me the means of maintenance, are always, if deemed in a proper physical condition, destined to an early grave, I can only afford a few minutes to condole with you on the loss you so feelingly announce. These minutes I now have given.

Very truly yours,
HENRY DAWSON.

No. 9.

From the wife of a farmer, who, having sewed rags enough to make a carpet, is in doubt whether to sell the rags, and with the money buy a mince-meat chopper and two cochin-china hens of an old lady who, having been afflicted with varicose veins, has determined to send her nephew, who has been working for a pump-maker in the neighboring village, but who comes home at night to sleep, to a school kept by a divinity student whose father has been educated by the clergyman who had married her father and mother, and to give up her little farm and go to East Durham, New York, to live with a cousin of her mother, named Amos Murdock, or to have the carpet made up by a weaver who had bought oats from her husband, for a horse which had been lent to him for his keep—being a little tender in his fore feet—by a city doctor, but who would still owe two or three dollars after the carpet was woven, and keep it until her daughter, who was married to a dealer in second-hand blowing-engines for agitating oil, should come to make her a visit, and then put it down in her second-story front chamber, with a small piece of another rag carpet, which had been under a bed, and was

not worn at all, in a recess which it would be a pity to cut a new carpet to fit, to an unmarried sister who keeps house for an importer of Limoges faience.

GREENVILLE, July 20, 1877.

DEAR MARIA: Now that my winter labors, so unavoidably continued through the vernal season until now, are happily concluded, I cannot determine, by any mental process with which I am familiar, what final disposition of the proceeds of my toil would be most conducive to my general well-being. If, therefore, you will bend the energies of your intellect upon the solution of this problem, you will confer a most highly appreciated favor upon

Your perplexed sister,
AMANDA DANIELS.

THAT SAME OLD COON

THAT SAME OLD COON

WE were sitting on the store porch of a small Virginia village. I was one of the party, and Martin Heiskill was the other one. Martin had been out fishing, which was an unusual thing for him.

"Yes, sir," said he, as he held up the small string of fish which he had laid carefully under his chair when he sat down to light his pipe, "that's all I've got to show for a day's work. But 'tain't often that I waste time that way. I don't b'lieve in huntin' fur a thing that ye can't see. Ef fishes sot on trees, now, and ye could shoot at 'em, I'd go out an' hunt fishes with anybody. But it's mighty triflin' work to be goin' it blind in a mill-pond."

I ventured to state that there were fish that were occasionally found on trees. In India, for instance, a certain fish climbs trees.

"A which whats?" exclaimed Martin, with an arrangement of pronouns peculiar to himself.

"Oh, yes!" he said, when I had told him all I knew about this bit of natural history. "That's very likely. I reckon they do that up North, where you come from, in some of them towns you was tellin' me about, where there's so many houses that they tech each other."

"That's all true about the fishes, Martin," said I,

wisely making no reference to the houses, for I did not want to push his belief too hard, "but we'll drop them now."

"Yes," said he, "I think we'd better."

Martin was a good fellow and no fool, but he had not travelled much, and had no correct ideas of cities, nor, indeed, of much of anything outside of his native backwoods. But of those backwoods he knew more than any other man I ever met. He liked to talk, but he resented tall stories.

"Martin," said I, glad to change the subject, "do you think there'll be many coons about, this fall?"

"About as many as common, I reckon," he answered. "What do you want to know fur?"

"I'd like to go out coon-hunting," I said. "That's something I have never tried."

"Well," said he, "I don't s'pose your goin' will make much difference in the number of 'em. But what's the good uv it? You'd better go possum-huntin'. You kin eat a possum."

"Don't you ever eat coons?" I asked.

"Eat coons!" he exclaimed, with contempt. "Why, there ain't a nigger in this county'd eat a coon. They ain't fit to eat."

"I should think they'd be as good as possums," said I. "They feed on pretty much the same things, don't they?"

"Well, there ain't much difference that way, but a possum's a mighty different thing from a coon when ye come to eat him. A possum's more like a kind o' tree-pig; an' when he's cooked he's sweeter than any suckin' pig you ever see. But a coon's more like a cat. Who'd eat cats?"

I was about to relate some city sausage stories, but I refrained.

"To be sure," continued Martin, "there's Colonel Tibbs, who says he's eat coon-meat, an' liked it fust-rate. But then ag'in, he says frogs is good to eat, so ye see there's no dependin' on what people say. Now, I know what I'm a-talkin' about. Coons ain't fit fur human bein's to eat."

"What makes you hunt 'em, then?" I asked.

"Hunt 'em fur fun," said the old fellow, striking a lucifer match under his chair to relight his pipe. "Ef ye talk about vittles, that's one thing, an' ef ye talk about fun, that's another thing. An' I don't know now whether you'd think it was fun. I kinder think you wouldn't. I reckon it'd seem like pretty hard work to you."

"I suppose it would," I said. "There are many things that would be hard work to me that would be nothing but sport to an old hunter like you."

"You're right, there, sir. You never spoke truer than that in your life. There's no man inside o' six counties that's hunted more'n I have. I've been at it ever sence I was a youngster, an' I've got a lot o' fun out uv it—more fun than anything else, fur that matter. You see, afore the war, people used to go huntin' more fur real sport than they do now. An' 'twa'n't because there was more game in this country then than there is now, fur there wa'n't—not half as much. There's more game in Virginny now than there's been any time this fifty years."

I expressed my surprise at this statement, and he continued:

"It all stands to reason, plain enough. Ef you

don't kill them wild critters off, they'll jist breed an' breed, till the whole country gits full uv 'em. An' nobody had no time to hunt 'em durin' the war—we was busy huntin' different game then, an' sometimes we was hunted ourselves—an' since then the most uv us has had to knuckle down to work. No time fur huntin' when you've got to do your own hoein' an' ploughin'—or, at least, a big part uv it. An' I tell ye that back there in the mountains there's lots o' deer where nobody livin' about here ever saw 'em before, an' as fur turkeys, an' coons, an' possums, there's more an' more uv 'em ev'ry year; but as fur beavers,—them confounded chill-an'-fever rep-tyles,—there's jist millions uv 'em, more or less."

"Do beavers have chills and fever?" I asked wonderingly.

"No," said he. "I wish they did. But they give it to folks. There ain't nothin' on earth that's raised the price o' quinine in this country like them beavers. Ye see, they've jist had the'r own way, now, pretty much ever sence the war broke out, an' they've gone to work an' built dams across pretty nigh all the cricks we got, an' that floods the bottom-lands, uv course, an' makes ma'shes an' swamps where they used to be fust-rate corn-land. Why, I tell ye, sir, down here on Colt's Creek there's a beaver-dam a quarter uv a mile long, an' the water's backed up all over everything. Ain't that enough to give a whole county the chills? An' it does it, too. Ef the people'd all go an' sit on that there dam, they'd shake it down. I tell ye, sir, the war give us, in this country, a good many things we didn't want, an' among 'em's chills. Before the war nobody never heard of sich things as

chills round about hyar. 'Tain't on'y the beavers, nuther. When ye can't afford to hire more'n three or four niggers to work a big farm, 'tain't likely ye kin do no ditchin', an' all the branches an' the ditches in the bottom-lands fills up, an' a feller's best corn-fields is pretty much all swamp, an' his family has to live on quinine."

"I should think it would pay well to hunt and trap these beavers," I remarked.

"Well, so it does, sometimes," said Martin. "But half the people ain't got no time. Now, it's different with me, because I'm not a-farmin'. An' then, it ain't everybody that kin git 'em. It takes a kind o' eddication to hunt beaver. But you was a-askin' about coons."

"Yes," I said. "I'd like to go coon-hunting."

"There's lots o' fun in it," said he, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, and putting up his cowhide boots on the top of the porch railing in front of him.

"About two or three years afore the war, I went out on a coon hunt which was the liveliest hunt I ever see in all my life. I never had sich a good hunt afore, nur never sence. I was a-livin' over in Powhatan, an' the coon was Haskins's coon. They called him Haskins's coon because he was 'most allus seen somewhere on ole Tom Haskins's farm. Tom's dead now, an' so is the coon, but the farm's thar, an' I'm here, so ye kin b'lieve this story jist as ef it was printed on paper. It was the most confoundedest queer coon anybody ever see in all this whole world. An' the queerness was this: it hadn't no stripes to its tail. Now, ye needn't say to me that no coon was ever that way, fur this coon was, an' that settles it. All

coons has four or five brown stripes a-runnin' roun' their tails—all 'cept this one coon uv Haskins's. An' what's more, this was the savagest coon anybody ever did see in this whole world. That's what sot everybody huntin' him, fur the savager a coon is, an' the more grit ther' is in him, the more's the fun when he comes to fight the dogs—fur that's whar the fun comes in. An' ther' is coons as kin lick a whole pack o' dogs, an' git off. This is jist what Haskins's coon did, lots o' times. I b'lieve every nigger in the county, an' pretty much half the white men, had been out huntin' that coon, an' they'd never got him yit. Ye see, he was so derned cunnin' an' gritty that when ye cut his tree down, he'd jist go through the dogs like a wasp in a Sunday-school, an' git away, as I tell ye. He must 'a' had teeth more'n an inch long, an' he had a mighty tough bite to him. Quick, too, as a black-snake. Well, they never got him, nohow, but he was often seed, fur he'd let a feller as hadn't a gun with him git a look at him in the daytime, which is contrary to the natur' of a coon, which keeps dark all day an' on'y comes out arter dark. But this here coon o' Haskins's was different from any coon anybody ever see in all this world. Sometimes ye'd see him a-settin' down by a branch, a-dippin' his food inter the water every time he took a bite, which is the natur' of a coon. But if ye put yer hand inter yer pocket fur so much as a pocket-pistol, he'd scoot afore ye could wink.

"Well, I made up my mind I'd go out after Haskins's coon, an' I got up a huntin' party. 'Twa'n't no trouble to do that. In them days ye could git up a huntin' party easier than anything else in this whole

world. All ye had to do was to let the people know, an' they'd be thar, black an' white. Why, I tell ye, sir, they used to go fox-huntin' a lot in them days, an' there wasn't half as many foxes as ther' is now, nuther. Ef a feller woke up bright an' early, an' felt like fox-huntin', all he had to do was to git on his horse, an' take his dogs an' his horn, an' ride off to his nex' neighbor's an' holler. An' up'd jump the nex' feller, an' git on his horse, an' take his dogs, an' them two'd ride off to the nex' farm an' holler, an' keep that up till ther' was a lot uv 'em, with the'r hounds, an' away they'd go, tip-it-ty-lick, after the fox an' the hounds—fur it didn't take long fur them dogs to scar' up a fox. An' they'd keep it up, too, like good fellers. Ther' was a party uv 'em, once, started out uv a Friday mornin', an' the'r fox, which was a red fox (fur a gray fox ain't no good fur a long run), took em clean over into Albemarle, an' none uv 'em didn't get back home till arter dark, Saturday. That was the way we used to hunt.

"Well, I got up my party, an' we went out arter Haskins's coon. We started out pretty soon arter supper. Ole Tom Haskins himself was along, because, uv course, he wanted to see his coon killed; an' ther' was a lot uv other fellers, that you wouldn't know ef I was to tell ye the'r names. Ye see, it was 'way down at the lower end of the county that I was a-livin' then. An' ther' was about a dozen niggers with axes, an' five or six little black boys to carry lightwood. Ther' was no less than thirteen dogs, all coon-hunters.

"Ye see, the coon-dog is sometimes a hound, an' sometimes he isn't. It takes a right smart dog to hunt a coon. An' sometimes ye kin train a dog

thet ain't a reg'lar huntin'-dog to be a fust-rate coon-dog, pertickerlerly when the fightin' comes in. To be sure, ye want a dog with a good nose to him to foller up a coon, but ye want fellers with good jaws an' teeth an' plenty of grit, too. We had thirteen of the best coon-dogs in the whole world, an' that was enough fur any one coon, I say, though Haskins's coon was a pertickerler kind of a coon, as I tell ye.

"Pretty soon arter we got inter Haskins's oak woods, jist back o' the house, the dogs got on the track uv a coon, an' arter 'em we all went, as hard as we could scoot. Uv course, we didn't know that it was Haskins's coon we was arter, but we made up our minds, afore we started, thet when we killed a coon an' found it wasn't Haskins's coon, we'd jist keep on till we did find him. We didn't 'spect to have much trouble a-findin' him, fur we knowed pretty much whar he lived, an' we went right thar. 'Tain't often anybody hunts fur one pertickerler coon, but that was the matter this time, as I tell ye."

It was evident, from the business-like way in which Martin Heiskill started into this story, that he wouldn't get home in time to have his fish cooked for supper, but that was not my affair. It was not every day that the old fellow chose to talk, and I was glad enough to have him go on as long as he would.

"As I tell ye," continued Martin, looking steadily over the toe of one of his boots, as if taking a long aim at some distant turkey, "we put off, hot an' heavy, arter that ar coon, an' hard work it was, too. The dogs took us through the very stickeryest part of the woods, an' then down the holler by the edge of Lumley's mill-pond,—whar no human bein'

in this world ever walked or run afore, I truly b'lieve, fur it was the meanest travellin'-groun' I ever see,—an' then back inter the woods ag'in. But 'twa'n't long afore we came up to the dogs, a-barkin' an' howlin' around a big chestnut-oak about three foot through, an' we knew we had him—that is, ef it wa'n't Haskins's coon. Ef it was his coon, maybe we had him, an' maybe we hadn't. The boys lighted up their lightwood torches, an' two niggers with axes went to work at the tree. An' them as wasn't choppin' had as much as they could do to keep the dogs back out o' the way o' the axes.

"The dogs they was jist goin' on as ef they was mad, an' ole Uncle Pete Williams—he was the one thet was a-holdin' on to Chink, the big dog—that dog's name was Chinkerpin, an' he was the best coon-dog in the whole world, I reckon. He was a big hound, brown an' black, an' he was the on'y dog in thet pack thet had never had a fight with Haskins's coon. They fetched him over from Cumberland a-purpose for this hunt. Well, as I tell ye, ole Pete, says he, 'Thar ain't no mistook dis time, Mahs'r Tom, now, I tell you. Dese yar dogs knows well 'nuf dat dat coon's Mahs'r Tom's coon, an' dey tell Chink, too, fur he's a-doin' de debbil's own pullin' dis time.' An' I reckon Uncle Pete was 'bout right, fur I thought the dog 'u'd pull him off his legs afore he got through.

"Pretty soon the niggers hollered fur to stan' from under, an' down came the chestnut-oak with the big smash, an' then ev'ry dog an' man an' nigger made one scoot fur that tree. But they couldn't see no coon, fur he was in a hole 'bout half-way up the trunk; an' then there was another high ole time

keepin' back the dogs till the fellers with axes cut him out. It didn't take long to do that. The tree was a-kind o' rotten up thar, an' afore I knowed it, out hopped the coon; an' then in less than half a shake, there was sich a fight as you never see in all this world.

"At first it 'peared like it was a blamed mean thing to let thirteen dogs fight one coon, but pretty soon I thought it was a little too bad to have on'y thirteen dogs fur sich a fiery savage beast as that ther' coon was. He jist laid down on his back an' buzzed around like a coffee-mill, an' whenever a dog got a snap at him, he got the coon's teeth inter him quick as lightnin'. Ther' was too many dogs in that fight, an' 'twa'n't long before some uv 'em found that out, an' got out o' the muss. An' it was some o' the dogs thet had had the best chance at the coon thet left fust.

"Afore long, though, old Chink, who'd 'a' been a-watchin' his chance, he got a good grip on that coon, an' that was the end uv him. He jist throwed up his hand.

"The minute I seed the fight was over, I rushed in an' grabbed that coon, an' like to got grabbed myself in doin' it, specially by Chink, who didn't know me. One o' the boys brought a lightwood torch so's we could see the little beast.

"Well, 'twa'n't Haskins's coon. He had rings round his tail, jist as reg'lar as ef he was the feller that set the fashion. So ther' was more coon-huntin' to be done that night. But ther' wa'n't nobody that objected to that, fur we was jist gittin' inter the fun o' the thing. An' I made up my mind I wasn't a-goin' home without the tail off er Haskins's coon.

"I disremember now whether the nex' thing we killed was a coon or a possum. It's a long time ago, an' I've been on lots o' hunts since thet. But the main p'ints o' this hunt I ain't likely to furgit, fur, as I tell ye, this was the liveliest coon hunt I ever went out on.

"Ef it was a possum we got next, ther' wasn't much fun about it, fur a possum's not a game beast. Ther's no fight in him, though his meat's better. When ye tree a possum, an' cut down the tree, an' cut him out uv his hole, ef he's in one, he jist keels over an' makes b'lieve he's dead, though that's ginerally no use at all, fur he's real dead in a minute, an' it's hardly wuth while fur him to take the trouble uv puttin' on the sham. Sometimes a possum'll hang by his tail to the limb of a tree, an' ye kin knock him down without cuttin' the tree down. He's not a game beast, as I tell ye. But they ain't allus killed on the spot. I've seed niggers take a long saplin' an' make a little split in it about the middle of the pole, an' stick the end of a possum's long rat-tail through the split an' carry him home. I've seed two niggers carryin' a pole that-a-way, one at each end, with two or three possums a-hangin' frum it. They take 'em home an' fatten 'em. I hate a possum, principally fur his tail. Ef it was curled up short an' had a knot in it, it would be more like a pig's tail, an' then it would seem as ef the thing was meant to eat. But the way they have it, it's like nothin' in the whole world but a rat's tail.

"So, as I tell ye, ef thet was a possum thet we treed nex', ther' wasn't no fight, an' some of the niggers got some meat. But after that—I remember it was about the middle o' the night—we got off ag'in, this time

really arter Haskins's coon. I was dead sure of it. The dogs went diff'rent, too. They was jist full o' fire an' blood, an' run ahead like as ef they was mad. They knowed they wasn't on the track of no common coon this time. As fur all uv us men, black an' white, we jist got up an' got arter them dogs, an' some o' the little fellers got stuck in a swamp, down by a branch that runs out o' Haskins's woods into Widder Thorp's corn-field; but we didn't stop fur nothin', an' they never ketched up. We kep' on down that branch an' through the whole corn-field, an' then the dogs they took us crossways up a hill, whar we had to cross two or three gullies, an' I like to broke my neck down one uv 'em, fur I was in sich a blamed hurry that I tried to jump across, an' the bank give way on the other side, as I might 'a' knowed it would, an' down I come, backward. But I landed on two niggers at the bottom of the gully, an' that kinder broke my fall, an' I was up an' a-goin' ag'in afore you'd 'a' knowed it.

"Well, as I tell ye, we jist b'iled up that hill, an' then we struck inter the widder's woods, which is the wust woods in the whole world, I reckon, fur runnin' through arter a pack o' dogs. The whole place was so growed up with chinkerpin-bushes and dogwood, an' every other kind o' underbrush, that a hog would 'a' sp'iled his temper goin' through thar in the daytime. But we jist r'ared an' plunged through them bushes right on to the tails o' the dogs, an' ef any uv us had had good clothes on, they'd 'a' been tore off our backs. But ole clothes won't tear, an' we didn't care ef they did. The dogs had a hot scent, an' I tell ye, we was close on to 'em when they got to the

critter. An' what d'ye s'pose the critter was? It was a dogarned possum in a trap!

"It was a trap sot by ole Uncle Enoch Peters, that lived on Widder Thorp's farm. He's dead now, but I remember him fust-rate. He had an ole mother over in Cumberland, an' he was the very oldest man in this country, an', I reckon, in the whole world, that had a livin' mother. Well, that there sneakin' possum had gone snifflin' along through the corn-field, an' up that hill, an' along the gullies, an' through that onarthly woods to Uncle Enoch's trap, an' we'd follered him as ef he'd had a store order fur a bar'l o' flour tied to his tail.

"Well, he didn't last long, fur the dogs an' the niggers, between 'em, tore that trap all to bits, an' what become o' the possum I don't b'lieve anybody knowed, 'cept it was ole Chink an' two or three uv the biggest dogs."

I here asked if coons were ever caught in traps.

"Certainly they is," said Martin. "I remember the time that ther' was a good many coons caught in traps. That was in the ole Henry Clay 'lection times. The coon he was the Whig beast. He stood for Harry Clay an' the hull Whig party. Ther' never was a pole-raisin', or a barbecue, or a speech meetin', or a torch-light percession, in the whole country, that they didn't want a live coon to be sot on a pole or somewhar whar the people could look at him an' be encouraged. But it didn't do 'em no good. Ole Harry Clay he went under, an' ye couldn't sell a coon for a dime.

"Well, as I tell ye, this was a possum in a trap, an' we was all pretty mad and pretty tired. We got out

on the edge o' the woods as soon as we could, an' thar was a field o' corn. The corn had been planted late, an' the boys found a lot o' roastin'-ears, though they was purty old, but we didn't care for that. We made a fire, an' roasted the corn, an' some o' the men had their 'ticklers' along,—enough to give us each a taste, —an' we lighted our pipes an' sat down to take a rest afore startin' off ag'in arter Haskins's coon."

"But I thought you said," I remarked, "that you knew you were after Haskins's coon the last time."

"Well, so we did know we was. But sometimes you know things as isn't so. Didn't ye ever find that out? It's so, anyway, jist as I tell ye." And then he continued his story:

"As we was a-settin' aroun' the fire, a-smokin' away, Uncle Pete Williams—he was the feller that had to hang on to the big dog Chink, as I tell ye—he come an' he says, 'Now, look-a-here, Mahs'r Tom an' de rest ob you-all, don't ye b'lieve we'd better gib up dis yere thing an' go home?' Well, none uv us thought that, an' we told him so, but he kep' on, an' begun to tell us we'd find ourselves in a heap o' misery, ef we didn't look out, pretty soon. Says he: 'Now, look-a-here, Mahs'r Tom an' you-all, you-all wouldn't 'a' ketched me out on this yere hunt ef I 'a' knowed ye was a-gwine to hunt possums. 'Tain't no luck to hunt possums: everybody knows dat. De debbil gits after a man as will go a-chasin' possums wid dogs when he kin cotch 'em a heap comfortabler in a trap. 'Tain't so much diff'rence 'bout coons, but the debbil he takes care o' possums. An' I 'spect de debbil knowed 'bout dis yere hunt, fur de oder ebenin' I was a-goin' down to de rock-spring wid a gourd to git

a drink, an' dar on de rock, wid his legs a-danglin' down to de water, sat de debbil hisself, a-chawin' green terbacker!' 'Green terbacker?' says I. 'Why, Uncle Pete, ain't the debbil got no better sense than that?' 'Now, look-a-here, Mahs'r Martin,' says he, 'de debbil knows what he's about, an' ef green terbacker was good fur anybody to chaw he wouldn't chaw it. An' he says to me, "Uncle Pete, been a-huntin' any possums?" An' says I, "No, mahs'r, I nebber do dat." An' den he look at me awful, fur I seed he didn't furgit nothin', an' he was a-sottin' dar, a-shinin' as ef he was polished all over wid shoe-blackin', an' he says, "Now, look-a-here, Uncle Pete, don't you eber do it. An' w'at's dat about dis yere Baptis' church at de cross-roads dat was sot afire?" An' I tol' him dat I didn't know nuffin 'bout dat—not one single word in dis whole world. Den he wink, an' he says, "Dem brudders in dat church hunt too many possums. Dey is allus a-huntin' possums, an' dat's de way dey lose der church. I sot dat church afire mesef. D'y' hear dat, Uncle Pete?" An' I was glad enough to hear it, too, for der was brudders in dat church dat said Yeller Joe an' me sot it afire 'cos we wasn't 'lected trustees; but dey can't say dat now, fur it's all plain as daylight, an' ef dey don't b'lieve it, I kin show 'em de berry gourd I tuk down to de rock-spring when I seed de debbil. An' it don't do to hunt no more possums, fur de debbil'd jist as soon scratch de end ob his tail ag'in a white man's church as ag'in a black man's church.'

"By this time we was all ready to start ag'in, an' we knowed that all Uncle Pete wanted was to git home ag'in, fur he was lazy, an' was sich an ole rascal that

he was afraid to go back by himself in the dark, fur fear the real debbil'd gobble him up ; an' so we didn't pay no 'tention to him, but jist started off ag'in. Ther' is niggers as b'lieve the debbil gits arter people that hunt possums, but Uncle Pete never b'lieved that when he was a-goin' to git the possum. Ther' wasn't no chance fur him this night, but he had to come along all the same, as I tell ye.

"'Twa'n't half an hour arter we started ag'in afore we found a coon, but 'twa'n't Haskins's coon. We was near the crick when the dogs got arter him, an' inste'd o' gittin' up a tree, he run up inter the roots uv a big pine thet had been blown down an' was a-layin' half in the water. The brush was mighty thick jist here, an' some uv us thought it was another possum, an' we kep' back most uv the dogs, fur we didn't want 'em to carry us along that crick-bank arter no possum. But some o' the niggers, with two or three dogs, pushed through the bushes, an' one feller clum up inter the roots uv the tree, an' out jumped Mr. Coon. He hadn't no chance to git off any other way than to clim' down some grape-vines thet was a-hangin' from the tree inter the water. So he slips down one o' them, an' as he was a-hangin' on like a sailor a-goin' down a rope, I got a look at him through the bushes, an' I see plain enough by the lightwood torch thet he wa'n't Haskins's coon. He had the commonest kinds o' bands on his tail.

"Well, that thar coon he looked like he was about the biggest fool uv a coon in this whole world. He come down to the water as ef he thought a dog couldn't swim, an' ef that's what he did think he foun' out his mistake as soon as he teched the water,

fur thar was a dog ready fur him. An' then they had it lively, an' the other dogs they jumped in, an' thar was a purty big splashin' an' plungin' an' bitin' in that thar crick ; an' I was jist a-goin' to push through an' holler fur the other fellers to come an' see the fun, when that thar coon he got off! He jist licked them dogs,—the meanest dogs we had along,—an' put fur the other bank, an' that was the end o' him. Coons is a good deal like folks—it don't pay to call none uv 'em fools till ye're done seein' what they're up to.

"Well, as I tell ye, we was then nigh the crick ; but soon as we lef' the widder's woods we struck off from it, fur none uv us, specially the niggers, wanted to go nigh 'Lijah Parker's. Reckon ye don't know 'Lijah Parker. Well, he lives 'bout three mile from here on the crick, an' he was then, an' is now, jist the laziest man in the whole world. He had two or three big red-oaks on his place thet he wanted cut down, but was too durned lazy to do it, an' he hadn't no money to hire anybody to do it, nuther, an' he was too stingy to spend it ef he'd had it. So he knowed ther' was a-goin' to be a coon hunt one night, an' the evenin' before he tuk a coon his boy'd caught in a possum-trap, an' he put a chain aroun' its body, and pulled it through his woods to one of his red-oak trees. Then he let the coon climb up a little ways, an' then he jerked him down ag'in, an' pulled him over to another tree, and so on, till he'd let him run up three big trees. Then his boy got a box, an' they put the coon in an' carried him home. Uv course, when the dogs come inter his woods—an' he knowed they was a-goin' to do that—they got on the scent o' this coon, an' when they got to the fust tree, they

thought they'd treed him, an' the niggers cut down that red-oak in no time. An' then, when ther' wa'n't no coon thar, they tracked him to the nex' tree, an' so on till the whole three trees was cut down. We wouldn't 'a' found out nothin' about this ef 'Lijah's boy hadn't told on the ole man, an' ye kin jist bet all ye're wuth that ther' ain't a man in this county that 'u'd cut one o' his trees down ag'in.

"Well, as I tell ye, we kep' clear o' Parker's place, an' we walked about two mile, an' then we found we'd gone clean around till we'd got inter Haskins's woods ag'in. We hadn't gone further inter the woods than ye could pitch a rock afore the dogs got on the track uv a coon, an' away we all went arter 'em. Even the little fellers that was back in the swamp away back was with us now, fur they got out an' was a-pokin' home through the woods. 'Twa'n't long afore that 'coon was treed, an' when we got up an' looked at the tree, we all felt dead sure it was Haskins's coon this time an' no mistake. Fur it was jist the kind o' tree that no coon but that coon would ever 'a' thought o' climbin'. Mos' coons an' possums shin it up a pretty tall tree, to git as fur away frum the dogs as they kin, an' the tall trees is often purty slim trees an' easy cut down. But this here coon o' Haskins's he had more sense than that. He jist scooted up the thickest tree he could find. He didn't care about gittin' up high. He knowed the dogs couldn't climb no tree at all, an' that no man or boy was a-comin' up after him. So he wanted to give 'em the best job o' choppin' he knowed how. Ther' ain't no smarter critter than coons in this whole world. Dogs ain't no circumstance to 'em. About

four or five year ago, I was a-livin' with Riley Marsh, over by the court-house, an' his wife she had a tame coon, an' this little beast was a mighty lot smarter than any human bein' in the house. Sometimes, when he'd come it a little too heavy with his tricks, they used to chain him up, but he always got loose an' come a-humpin' inter the house with a bit o' the chain to his collar. D'ye know how a coon walks? He never comes straight ahead like a Christian, but he humps up his back, an' he twists roun' his tail, an' he sticks out his head, crooked-like, from under his ha'r, an' he comes inter a room sideways an' a-kind o' cross, as ef he'd a-wanted ter stay out an' play an' ye'd made him come in the house ter learn his lessons.

"Well, as I tell ye, this coon broke his chain ev'ry time, an' it was a good thick dog-chain, an' that puzzled Riley. But one day he saw the little runt goin' aroun' an' aroun', hoppin' over his chain ev'ry time, till he got an awful big twist on his chain, an' then it was easy enough to strain on it till a link opened. But Riley put a swivel on his chain, an' stopped that fun. But they'd let him out purty often, an' one day he squirmed himself inter the kitchen, an' thar he see the tea-kittle a-settin' by the fireplace. The lid was off, an' ole cooney thought that was jist the kind uv a black hole he'd been used to crawlin' inter afore he got tame. So he crawled in an' curled himself up an' went to sleep. Arter a while, in comes Aunt Hannah to git supper, an' she picks up the kittle, an', findin' it heavy, thinks it was full o' water, an' puts on the lid an' hung it over the fire. Then she clapped on some lightwood to hurry up things. Purty soon that kittle begun to warm, an' then, all uv a sudden, off

pops the lid, an' out shoots Mr. Coon like a rocket. An' ther' never was, in all this whole world, sich a frightened ole nigger as Aunt Hannah. She thought it was the debbil sure, an' she give a yell that fetched ev'ry man on the place. That 'ere coon had more mischief in him than any live thing ye ever see. He'd pick pockets, hide ev'rything he could find, an' steal eggs. He'd find an egg ef the hen 'u'd sneak off an' lay it at the bottom uv the crick. One Sunday, Riley's wife went to all-day preachin' at Hornorsville, an' she put six mockin'-birds she was a-raisin' in one cage, an', fur fear the coon 'u'd git 'em, she hung the cage frum a hook in the middle uv the ceilin' in the chamber. She had to git up on a chair to do it. Well, she went to preachin', an' that coon he got inter the house an' eat up ev'ry one o' them mockin'-birds. Ther' wasn't no tellin' 'xactly how he done it, but we reckoned he got up on the high mantelpiece an' made one big jump from thar to the cage, an' hung on till he put his paw through an' hauled out one bird. Then he dropped an' eat that, an' made another jump, till they was all gone. Anyway, he got all the birds, an' that was the last meal he ever eat.

"Well, as I tell ye, that coon he got inter the thickest tree in the whole woods, an' thar he sot, a-peepin' at us from a crotch that wasn't twenty feet frum the ground. Young Charley Ferris he took a burnin' chunk that one o' the boys had fetched along frum the fire, an' throwed it up at him, so we could all see him plain. He was Haskins's coon, sure. There wasn't a stripe on his tail. Arter that the niggers jist made them axes swing, I tell ye. They

had a big job afore 'em, but they took turns at it, an' didn't waste no time. An' the rest uv us we got the dogs ready. We wasn't a-goin' to let this coon off this here time. No, sir! Ther' was too many dogs, as I tell ye, so we had four or five uv the clumsiest uv 'em tuk a little way off, with boys to hol' 'em, an' the other dogs an' the hounds, specially old Chink, was held ready to tackle the coon when the time come. An' we had to be mighty sharp about this, too, fur we all saw that that thar coon was a-goin' to skip the minute the tree come down. He wasn't goin' to git in a hole an' be cut out. Ther' didn't 'pear to be any hole, an' he didn't want none. All he wanted was a good thick tree an' a crotch to set in an' think. That was what he was a-doin'. He was cunjerin' up some trick or other. We all knowed that, but we jist made up our minds to be ready fur him, an' though, as he was Haskins's coon, the odds was ag'in' us, we was dead sure we'd git him this time.

"I thought that thar tree never *was* a-comin' down, but purty soon it began to crack an' lean, an' then down she come. Ev'ry dog, man, an' boy made a rush fur that crotch, but ther' was no coon thar. As the tree come down he seed how the land lay, an' quicker'n any light'in' in this whole world he jist streaked the other way to the root o' the tree, give one hop over the stump, an' was off. I seed him do it, an' the dogs see him, but they wasn't quick enough, and couldn't stop 'emselves—they was goin' so hard fur the crotch.

"Ye never did see in all yer days sech a mad crowd as that thar crowd around that tree, but they didn't stop none to sw'ar. The dogs was arter the coon, an'

arter him we went, too. He put fur the edge of the woods, which looked queer, fur a 'coon never will go out into the open if he kin help it. But the dogs was so hot arter him that he couldn't run fur, an' he was treed ag'in in less than five minutes. This time he was in a tall hick'ry-tree, right on the edge o' the woods, and it wa'n't a very thick tree, nuther, so the niggers they jist tuk their axes; but afore they could make a single crack, ole Haskins he runs at 'em an' pushes 'em away.

"'Don't ye tech that thar tree!' he hollers. 'That hick'ry marks my line!' An' sure enough, that was the tree with the surveyors' cuts on it, thet marked the place where the line took a corner thet run atween Haskins's farm an' Widder Thorp's. He knowed the tree the minute he seed it, an' so did I, fur I carried the chain fur the surveyors when they laid off the line; an' we could all see the cut they'd blazed on it, fur it was fresh yit, an' it was gittin' to be daylight now, an' we could see things plain.

"Well, as I tell ye, ev'ry man uv us jist r'ared an' snorted, an' the dogs an' boys was madder'n the rest uv us. But ole Haskins he didn't give in. He jist walked aroun' that tree an' wouldn't let a nigger tech it. He said he wanted to kill the coon jist as much as anybody, but he wasn't a-goin' to have his line sp'iled, arter the money he'd spent, fur all the coons in this whole world.

"Now did ye ever hear of sich a cute trick as that? That thar coon he must 'a' knowed that was Haskins's line-tree, an' I spec' the'd 'a' made fur it fust ef he'd a-knowed ole Haskins was along. But he didn't know it till he was a-settin' in the crotch uv

the big tree an' could look aroun' an' see who was thar. It wouldn't 'a' been no use fur him to go fur that hick'ry ef Haskins hadn't 'a' been thar, fur he knowed well enough it 'u'd 'a' come down, sure."

I smiled at this statement, but Martin shook his head.

"'Twon't do," he said, "to undervally the sense of no coon. How're ye goin' to tell what he knows? Well, as I tell ye, we was jist gittin' madder an' madder when a nigger named Wash Webster he run out in the field,—it was purty light now, as I tell ye,—an' he hollers, 'Oh, Mahs'r Tom! Mahs'r Tom! Dat ar coon he ain't you coon! He got stripes to he tail!'

"We all made a rush out inter the field, to try to git a look, an' sure enough we could see the little beast a-settin' up in a crotch over on that side. An' I do b'lieve he knowed what we was all a-lookin' up at, fur he jist kind o' lowered his tail out o' the crotch so's we could see it, an' thar it was, striped, jist like any other coon's tail."

"But you were so positively sure, this time, that it was Haskins's coon," I said. "You said you saw, when the man threw the blazing chunk into the big tree, that it had no bands on its tail."

"That's so," said Martin. "But ther' ain't no man that kin see 'xactly straight uv a dark mornin', with no light but a flyin' chunk, an' specially when he wants to see somethin' that ain't thar. An' as to bein' certain about that coon, I jist tell ye that ther's nothin' a man's more like to be mistook about than a thing he knows fur dead sure.

"Well, as I tell ye, when we seed thet that thar coon

wa'n't Haskins's coon, arter all, an' thet we couldn't git him out er that tree as long as the ole man was thar, we jist give up an' put across the field fur Haskins's house, whar we was a-goin' to git breakfus'. Some of the boys an' the dogs stayed aroun' the tree, but ole Haskins he ordered 'em off an' wouldn't let nobody stay thar, though they had a mighty stretchin' time gittin' the dogs away."

"It seems to me," said I, "that there wasn't much profit in that hunt."

"Well," said Martin, putting his pipe in his pocket, and feeling under his chair for his string of fish, which must have been pretty dry and stiff by this time, "the fun in a coon hunt ain't so much in gittin' the coon as goin' arter him—which is purty much the same in a good many other things, as I tell ye."

And he took up his fish and departed.

OUR STORY

OUR STORY

I BECAME acquainted with Miss Bessie Vancouver at a reception given by an eminent literary gentleman in New York. The circumstances were a little peculiar. Miss Vancouver and I had each written and recently published a book, and we were introduced to each other as young authors whose works had made us known to the public, and who, consequently, should know each other. The peculiarity of the situation lay in the fact that I had not read Miss Vancouver's book, nor had she read mine. Consequently, although each felt bound to speak of the work of the other, neither of us could do it except in the most general and cautious way. I was quite sure that her book was a novel, but that was all that I knew about it, except that I had heard it well spoken of. But she supposed my book was of a scientific character, whereas, in reality, it also was a novel, although its title did not indicate the fact. There was, therefore, an air of restraint and stiffness about our first interview which it might not have had if we had frankly acknowledged our shortcomings. But, as the general conversation led her to believe that she was the only person in the room who had not read my book, and me to believe that I was the only one who

had not read hers, we were naturally loath to confess the truth to each other.

I next met Miss Vancouver in Paris, at the house of a lady whose parlors are the frequent rendezvous of Americans, especially those given to art or literature. This time we met on different ground. I had read her book and she mine, and as soon as we had shaken hands we began to talk of each other's work, not as if it had been the beginning of a new conversation, but rather as the continuation of one broken off. Each liked the book of the other extremely, and we were free to say so.

"But I am not satisfied with my novel," said Miss Vancouver. "There is too much oneness about it, by which I mean that it is not diversified enough. It is all, or nearly all, about two people, who, of course, have but one object in life, and it seems to me now that their story might have been finished a great deal sooner, though, of course, in that case it would not have been long enough to make a book."

To this I politely answered that I did not agree with her, for the story was interesting to the very end. But, of course, if she had put more characters into it, and they had been as good in their way as those she already had, the book would have been that much the better. "As for me," I continued, "my trouble is entirely the other way. I have no oneness whatever. My tendency is much more to fifteenness or twentyness. I carry a story a little way in one direction, and then I stop and go off in another. It is sometimes difficult to make it understood why a character should have been brought into the story at all,

and I have had a good deal of trouble in making some of them do something toward the end to show that they are connected with the general plot."

She said she had noticed that there was a wideness of scope in my book, but what she would have said further I do not know, for our hostess now came down upon us and carried off Miss Vancouver to introduce her to an old lady who had successfully steered about fifty barks across that sea on which Miss Vancouver had just set out.

Our next meeting was in a town on the Mediterranean, in the south of France. I had secured board at a large pension there, and was delighted to find that Miss Bessie Vancouver and her mother were already inmates of the house. As soon as I had the opportunity, I broached to her an idea which had frequently possessed my mind since our conversation in Paris. I proposed that we should write a story together, something like Erckmann-Chatrian, or Mark Twain and Mr. Warner in "The Gilded Age." Since she had too much unity of purpose and travelled in too narrow a path, while I branched off too much and had too great a tendency to variety, our styles, if properly blended, would possess all the qualities needed in a good story. So there was no reason why we should not, writing thus together, achieve a success greater, perhaps, than either of us could expect writing alone. I had thought so much on this subject that I was able to say a great deal, and to say it pretty well, too, so far as I could judge. Miss Vancouver listened with great attention, and the more I said, the better the idea pleased her. She said she would take the afternoon

to consider the matter, and in the evening she told me in the parlor that she had made up her mind, if I still thought well of the plan, to assist me in writing a story,—this being the polite way in which she chose to put it,—but that she thought it would be better for us to begin with a short story, and not with a book, for in this way we could sooner see how we would be likely to succeed. Of course I agreed to this proposition, and we arranged that we should meet the next morning in the garden and lay out a plan for our story.

The garden attached to the house in which we lived was a very quaint and pleasant one. It had been made a hundred years ago or more by an Italian nobleman, whose mansion, now greatly altered, had become our present pension. The garden was laid out in a series of terraces on the side of a hill, and abounded in walks shaded by orange- and lemon-trees, arbors, and vine-covered trellises, fountains half concealed by overhanging ivy, and suddenly discovered stairways, wide and shadowy, leading up into regions of greater quaintness and seclusion. Flowers were here, and palm-trees, and great cactus-bushes, with their red fruit half hollowed out by the nibbling birds. From the upper terraces we could see the blue Mediterranean spreading far away on one side, while the snow-covered tops of the Maritime Alps stood bright against the sky. The garden was little frequented, and altogether it was a good place in which to plan a story.

We consulted together for several days before we actually began to work. At first we sat in an arbor on one of the lower terraces, where there were a little

ron table and some chairs; but now and then a per-
on would come there for a morning stroll, and so we
noved up higher to a seat under a palm-tree, and the
ıext day to another terrace, where there was a se-
cluded corner overshadowed by huge cacti. But the
place which suited us best of all was the top of an old
ower at one end of the garden. This tower had been
uilt many, many hundred years before the garden
vas thought of, and its broad, flat roof was level with
ne of the higher terraces. Here we could work and
consult in quiet, with little fear of being disturbed.

Not finding it easy to plan out the whole story at
nce, we determined to begin by preparing back-
grounds. We concluded that as this was to be a short
tory, it would be sufficient to have descriptions of
wo natural scenes in which the two principal inci-
dents should occur; and as we wished to do all our
vork from natural models, we thought it best to de-
cribe the scene which lay around us, than which noth-
ng could be more beautiful or more suitable. One
cene was to be on the sea-shore, with a mellow light
ıpon the rippling waves, and the sails of fishing-ves-
els in the distance. This Miss Vancouver was to do,
vhile I was to take a scene among the hills and moun-
ains at the back of the town. I walked over there
ne afternoon when Miss Vancouver had gone out
vith her mother. I got on a high point, and worked
ıp a very satisfactory description of the frowning
ıountains behind me, the old monasteries on the hills,
nd the town stretching out below, with a little river
ushing along between two rows of picturesque wash-
rwomen to the sea.

We read our backgrounds to each other, and were

both very well satisfied. Our styles were as different as the scenes we described. Hers was clear and smooth, and mine forcible and somewhat abrupt, and thus the strong points of each scene were better brought out; but in order that our styles might be unified, so to speak, by being judiciously blended, I suggested some strong and effective points to be introduced into her description, while she toned down some of my phrases, and added a word here and there which gave a color and beauty to the description which it had not possessed before.

Our backgrounds being thus satisfactory,—and it took a good deal of consultation to make them so,—our next work was to provide characters for the story. These were to be drawn from life, for it would be perfectly ridiculous to create imaginary characters when there were so many original and interesting personages around us. We soon agreed upon an individual who would serve as a model for our hero. I forget whether it was I or Miss Vancouver who first suggested him. He was a young man, but not so very young either, who lived in the house with us, and about whom there was a mystery. Nobody knew exactly who he was, or where he came from, or why he was here. It was evident he did not come for society, for he kept very much to himself. And the attractions of the town could not have brought him here, for he seemed to care very little about them. We seldom saw him, except at the table and occasionally in the garden. When we met him in the latter place, he always seemed anxious to avoid observation, and as we did not wish to hurt his feelings by letting him suppose that he was an object of curiosity to us, we

endeavored, as far as possible, to make it apparent that we were not looking at him or thinking of him. But still, whenever we had a good chance, we studied him. Of course, we could not make out his mystery, but that was not necessary, nor did we, indeed, think it would be proper. We could draw him as we saw him, and then make the mystery what we pleased, its character depending a good deal upon the plot we devised.

Miss Vancouver undertook to draw the hero, and she went to work upon him immediately. In personal appearance she altered the model a good deal. She darkened his hair, and took off his whiskers, leaving him only a mustache. She thought, too, that he ought to be a little taller, and asked me my height, which is five feet nine. She considered that a very good height, and brought the hero up to it. She also made him some years younger, but endeavored, as far as seemed suitable to the story, to draw him exactly as he was.

I was to do the heroine, but found it very hard to choose a model. As I said before, we determined to draw all our characters from life; but I could think of no one, in the somewhat extensive company by which we were surrounded, who would answer my purpose. Nor could I fix my mind upon any person in other parts of the world, whom I knew or had known, who resembled the idea I had formed of our heroine. After thinking this matter over a good deal, I told Miss Vancouver that I believed the best thing I could do would be to take her for my model. I was with her a good deal, and thus could study out and work up certain points as I wrote, which would

be a great advantage. She objected to this, because, as she said, the author of a story should not be drawn as its heroine. But I asserted that this would not be the case. She would merely suggest the heroine to me, and I would so do my work that the heroine would not suggest her to anybody else. This, I thought, was the way in which a model ought to be used. After we had talked the subject over a good deal, she agreed to my plan, and I went to work with much satisfaction. I gave no definite description of the lady, but endeavored to indicate the impression which her person and character produced upon me. As such impressions are seldom the same in any two cases, there was no danger that my description could be referred back to her.

When I read to her the sketch I had written, she objected to parts of it as not being correct. But as I asserted that it was not intended as an exact copy of the model, she could not say it was not a true picture, and so, with some slight modifications, we let it stand. I thought myself that it was a very good piece of work. To me it seemed very lifelike and piquant, and I believed that other people would think it so.

We were now ready for the incidents and the plot. But at this point we were somewhat interrupted by Mrs. Vancouver. She came to me one morning, when I was waiting to go with her daughter to our study in the garden, and told me that she was very sorry to notice that Miss Vancouver and I had attracted attention to ourselves by being so much together, and, while she understood the nature of the literary labor on which we were engaged, she did not wish her daughter to become the object of general attention

and remark in a foreign pension. I was very angry when I heard that people had been directing upon us their impertinent curiosity, and I discoursed warmly upon the subject.

"Where is the good," I said, "of a person or persons devoting himself or themselves, with enthusiasm and earnestness, to his or their life-work, if he or they are to be interfered with by the impertinent babble of the multitude?"

Mrs. Vancouver was not prepared to give an exact answer to this question, but she considered the babble of the multitude a very serious thing. She had been talking to her daughter on the subject, and thought it right to speak to me.

That morning we worked separately in our rooms, but we accomplished little or nothing. It was, of course, impossible to do anything of importance in a work of this kind without consultation and coöperation. The next day, however, I devised a plan which would enable us, I thought, to pursue our labors without attracting attention, and Mrs. Vancouver, who was a kind-hearted woman, and took a great interest in her daughter's literary career, told me if I could successfully carry out anything of the kind I might do so. She did not inquire into particulars, nor did I explain them to Miss Bessie, but I told the latter that we would not go out together into the garden, but that I would go first, and she should join me about ten minutes afterwards on the tower, but she was not to come if she saw any one about.

Near the top of the hill, above the garden, once stood an ancient mansion, of which nothing now remained but the remnants of some massive masonry.

A courtyard, however, of this old edifice was still surrounded by a high wall, which formed the upper boundary of our garden. From a point near the tower a flight of twisting stone steps, flanked by blank walls, which turned themselves in various directions to suit the angles of the stairway, led to a green door in this wall. Through this door Miss Vancouver and myself, and doubtless many other persons, had often wished to pass, but it was locked, and, on inquiry, we found that there was no key to be had. The day previous, however, when wandering by myself, I had examined this door, and found that it was fastened merely by a snap-lock which had no handle, but was opened by a key. I had a knife with a long, strong blade, and pushing this into the hasp, I easily forced back the bolt. I then opened the door and walked into the old courtyard.

When Miss Vancouver appeared on the tower, I was standing at the top of the stone steps just mentioned, with the green door slightly ajar. Calling to her in a low tone, she ran up the steps, and, to her amazement, I ushered her into the courtyard and closed the door behind us.

"There," I exultingly exclaimed, "is our study, where we can write our story without interruption. We will come and go away separately. The people of the pension will not know that we are here or have been here, and there will be no occasion for that impertinent attention to which your mother so properly objects."

Miss Vancouver was delighted, and we walked about and surveyed the courtyard with much satisfaction. I had already selected the spot for our work.

It was in the shade of an olive-tree, the only tree in the enclosure, beneath which there was a rude seat. I spread a rug upon the grass, and Miss Bessie sat upon the seat, and put her feet upon the rug, leaving room for me to sit thereon. We now took out our little blank-books and our stylograph pens and were ready for work. I explained that I had done nothing the day before, and Miss Vancouver said that had also been the case with her. She had not wished to do anything important without consultation, but supposing that, of course, the hero was to fall in love with the heroine, she thought she might as well make him begin, but she found she could not do it as she wished. She wanted him to indicate to the lady that he was in love with her without exactly saying so. Could I not suggest some good form for giving expression to this state of things? After a little reflection, I thought I could.

"I will speak," said I, "as if I were the hero, and then you can see how it will suit."

"Yes," said she, "but you must not forget that what you say should be very gradual."

I tried to be as gradual as I could, and to indicate by slow degrees the state of mind in which we wished our hero to be. As the indication became stronger and stronger, I thought it right to take Miss Vancouver's hand; but to this she objected, because, as she said, it was more than indication, and besides, it prevented her from writing down what I said. We argued this point a little while without altering our position, and I asserted that the hand-holding only gave point and earnestness to the hero's remarks, which otherwise would not be so natural and true to

life, and if she wanted to use her right hand, her left hand would do to hold. We made this change, and I proceeded with the hero's remarks.

There was in our pension a young German girl named Margarita. She was a handsome, plump maiden, and spoke English very well. There was another young lady, also a German, named Gretzel. She was a little creature and the fast friend of Margarita. These two had a companion whose name I did not know. She was a little older than the others, and was, I think, a Pole. She also understood English.

As I was warming up toward the peroration of our hero's indication, I raised my eyes, and saw, on the brow of the hill, not a stone's throw from us, these three girls. They were talking earnestly and walking directly toward us. The place where they were was used as a public pleasure-ground, and was separated from the old courtyard by a picket fence. Although the girls could not come to us, there was nothing to prevent their seeing us if they chose to look our way, for they were on ground which was higher than the top of the fence.

When I saw these girls I was horror-stricken, and my knees, on which I rested, trembled beneath me. I did not dare to rise, nor to change my position, for fear the motion should attract attention, nor did I cease my remarks, for had I suddenly done so, my companion would have looked around to see what was the matter, and would certainly have jumped up, or have done something which would have brought the eyes of those girls upon us. But my voice dropped very low, and I wondered if there was any way of my gently rolling out of sight.

As the indication became stronger, I thought it right to take Miss Vancouver's hand.

But at this moment our young man with a mystery suddenly appeared on the other side of the fence, walking rapidly toward the girls. There was something on the ocean, probably a ship, to which he directed their attention, and then he actually led them off, pointing, as it appeared, to a spot from which the distant object could be more plainly seen. They all walked away and disappeared behind the brow of the hill. With a great feeling of relief, I arose and recounted what had happened. Miss Vancouver sprang to her feet, shut up her blank-book, and put the stopper on her stylograph.

"This place will not do at all to work in," she said. "I will not have those girls staring at us."

I was obliged to admit that this particular spot would not do. I had not thought of any one walking in the grounds immediately above us, especially in the morning, which was our working-time.

"They may return," she said, "and we must go away immediately and separately."

But I could not agree thus to give up our new-found study. The enclosure was quite extensive, with ruins at the other end, near which we might find some spot entirely protected from observation. So I went to look for such a place, leaving Miss Vancouver under the olive-tree, where, if she were seen alone, it would not matter. I found a spot which might answer, and, returning to the tree, sent her to look at it. While we were thus engaged we heard the report of the noon cannon. This startled us both. The hour for *déjeûner à la fourchette* at the pension was twelve o'clock, and people were generally very prompt at that meal. It would not do for us to be late. Snatch-

ing up our effects, we hurried to the green door, but when I tried to open it as before, I found it impossible—a projecting strip of wood on the inside of the doorway preventing my reaching the bolt with my knife-blade. I tried to tear away the strip, but it was too firmly fastened. We both became very nervous and troubled. It was impossible to get out of the enclosure except through that door, for the wall was quite high and the top covered with broken glass embedded in the mortar. The party on the hill had had time to go down and around through the town to the pension. Our places at the table would be the only ones empty. What could attract more attention than this? And what would Mrs. Vancouver think and say? At this moment we heard some one working at the lock on the other side. The door opened, and there stood our hero.

"I heard some one at this door," he said, "and supposing it had been accidentally closed, I came up and opened it."

"Thank you; thank you very much!" cried Miss Vancouver.

Away she ran to the house. If only I were late it did not matter at all. I followed with our hero, and endeavored to make some explanation of the predicament of myself and the young lady. He took it all as a matter of course, as if the old courtyard were a place of general resort.

"When persons stroll through that door," he said, "they should put a piece of stick or of stone against the jamb, so that if the door is blown shut by the wind the latch may not catch."

And then he called my attention to a beautiful

plant of the aloe kind which had just begun to blossom.

Miss Vancouver reached the breakfast-table in good time, but she told me afterwards she would work in the old courtyard no more; the perils were too many.

For some days after this our story made little progress, for opportunities for consultation did not occur. I was particularly sorry for this, because I wanted very much to know how Miss Vancouver liked my indicative speech and what she had made of it. Early one afternoon about this time, our hero, between whom and myself a slight acquaintance had sprung up, came to me and said:

"The sea is so perfectly smooth and quiet to-day that I thought it would be pleasant to take a row, and I have hired a boat. How would you like to go with me?"

I was pleased with his friendly proposition, and I am very fond of rowing, but yet I hesitated about accepting the invitation, for I had hoped that afternoon to find some opportunity for consultation in regard to the work on which I was engaged.

"The boat is rather large for two persons," he remarked. "Have you any friends you would like to ask to go with us?"

This put a different phase upon affairs. I instantly said that I thought a row would be charming that afternoon, and suggested that Mrs. Vancouver and her daughter might like to take advantage of the opportunity.

The ladies were quite willing to go, and in twenty minutes we set off, two fishermen in red liberty-caps

pushing us from the pebbly beach. Our hero took one oar and I another, and we pulled together very well. The ladies sat in the stern, and enjoyed the smooth sea and the lovely day. We rowed across the little bay and around a high promontory, where there was a larger bay with a small town in the distance. The hero suggested that we should land here, as we could get some good views from the rocks. To this we all agreed, and when we had climbed up a little distance, Mrs. Vancouver found some wild flowers which interested her very much. She was, in a certain way, a floraphobist, and took an especial delight in finding in foreign countries blossoms which were the same as or similar to flowers she was familiar with in New England. Our hero also had a fancy for wild flowers, and it was not long before he showed Mrs. Vancouver a little blossom which she was very sure she had seen either at East Gresham or Milton Centre. Leaving these two to their floral researches, Miss Vancouver and I climbed higher up the rocks, where the view would be better. We found a pleasant ledge, and although we could not see what was going on below us, and the view was quite cut off in the direction of the town, we had an admirable outlook over the sea, on which, in the far distance, we could see the sails of a little vessel.

"This will be an admirable place to do a little work on our story," I said. "I have brought my blank-book and stylograph."

"And so have I," said she.

I then told her that I had been thinking over the matter a good deal, and that I believed in a short story two long speeches would be enough for the hero

to make, and proposed that we should now go on with the second one. She thought well of that, and took a seat upon a rocky projection, while I sat upon another quite near.

"This second speech," said I, "ought to be more than indicative, and should express the definite purpose of the hero's sentiments, and I think there should be corresponding expressions from the heroine, and would be glad to have you suggest such as you think she would make." I then began to say what I thought a hero ought to say under the circumstances. I soon warmed up to my task wonderfully, and expressed with much earnestness and ardor the sentiments I thought proper for the occasion. I first held one of Miss Vancouver's hands, and then both of them, she trusting to her memory in regard to memoranda. Her remarks in the character of the heroine were, however, much briefer than mine, but they were enough. If necessary, they could be worked up and amplified.

I think we had said all or very nearly all there was to say when we heard a shout from below. It was our hero calling us. We could not see him, but I knew his voice. He shouted again, and then I arose from the rock on which Bessie was sitting and answered him. He now made his appearance some distance below us, and said that Mrs. Vancouver did not care to come up any higher to get the views, and that she thought it would be better to reach home before the sun should set.

That evening, in the salon, Bessie spoke to me apart. "Our hero," she said, "is more than a hero. He is a guardian angel. You must fathom his mys-

tery. I am sure that it is far better than anything we can invent for him."

I set myself to work to discover, if possible, not only the mystery which had first interested us in our hero, but also the reason and purpose of his guardian-angelship. He was an American, and now that I had come to know him better, I found him a very agreeable talker.

Our hero was the first person whom I told of my engagement to Bessie. Mrs. Vancouver was very particular that this state of affairs should be made known. "If you are engaged," she said, "of course you can be together as much as you please. It is the custom in America, and nobody need make any remarks."

In talking to our hero, I told him of many little things that had happened at various times, and endeavored by these friendly confidences to make him speak of his own affairs. It must not be supposed that I was actuated by prying curiosity, but certainly I had a right to know something of a person to whom I had told so much. But he always seemed a great deal more interested in us than in himself, and I took so much interest in his interest, which was very kindly expressed, that his affairs never came into our conversation.

But just as he was going away—he left the little town a few days before we did—he told me that he was a writer, and that for some time past he had been engaged upon a story.

Our story was never finished. His was. This is it.

DERELICT

A TALE OF THE WAYWARD SEA

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A TALE OF THE WAYWARD SEA

ON the 25th of May, 1887, I sat alone upon the deck of the *Sparhawk*, a three-masted schooner, built, according to a description in the cabin, at Sackport, Maine. I was not only alone on the deck, but I was alone on the ship. The *Sparhawk* was a "derelict"—that is, if a vessel with a man on board of her can be said to be totally abandoned.

I had now been on board the schooner for eight days. How long before that she had been drifting about at the mercy of the winds and currents I did not then know, but I discovered afterwards that during a cyclone early in April she had been abandoned by her entire crew, and had since been reported five times to the Hydrographic Office of the Navy Department in Washington, and her positions and probable courses duly marked on the pilot chart.

She had now become one of that little fleet abandoned at sea for one cause or another, and floating about this way and that, as the wild winds blew or the ocean currents ran. Voyaging without purpose, as if manned by the spirits of ignorant landsmen,

sometimes backward and forward over comparatively small ocean spaces, and sometimes drifting for many months and over thousands of miles, these derelicts form, at night and in fog, one of the dangers most to be feared by those who sail upon the sea.

As I said before, I came on board the abandoned *Sparhawk* on the seventeenth of May, and very glad indeed was I to get my feet again on solid planking. Three days previously the small steamer *Thespia*, from Havana to New York, on which I had been a passenger, had been burned at sea, and all on board had left her in the boats.

What became of the other boats I do not know, but the one in which I found myself, in company with five other men, all Cuban cigar-makers, was nearly upset by a heavy wave during the second night we were out, and we were all thrown into the sea. As none of the Cubans could swim, they were all lost, but I succeeded in reaching the boat, which had righted itself, though half full of water.

There was nothing in the boat but two oars which had not slipped out of their rowlocks, a leather scoop which had been tied to a thwart, and the aforementioned water.

Before morning I had nearly bailed out the boat, and fortunate it was for me that up to the time of the upset we had had enough to eat and drink, for otherwise I should not have had strength for that work and for what followed.

Not long after daybreak I sighted the *Sparhawk*, and immediately began to make such signals as I could. The vessel appeared to be but a few miles

distant, and I could not determine whether she was approaching me or going away from me. I could see no sign that my signals had been noticed, and began frantically to row toward her. After a quarter of an hour of violent exertion, I did not appear to be much nearer to her; but, observing her more closely, I could see, even with my landsman's eyes, that something was the matter with her. Portions of her mast and rigging were gone, and one large sail at her stern appeared to be fluttering in the wind.

But it mattered not to me what had happened to her. She was a ship afloat, and I must reach her. Tired, hungry, and thirsty, I rowed and rowed, but it was not until long after noon that I reached her. She must have been much farther from me than I had supposed.

With a great deal of trouble I managed to clamber on board, and found the ship deserted. I had suspected that this would be the case, for as I had drawn near I would have seen some sign that my approach was noticed had there been anybody on board to perceive it. But I found food and water, and when I was no longer hungry or thirsty I threw myself in a berth, and slept until the sun was high the next day.

I had now been on the derelict vessel for eight days. Why she had been deserted and left to her fate I was not seaman enough to know. It is true that her masts and rigging were in a doleful condition, but she did not appear to be leaking, and rode well upon the sea. There was plenty of food and water on board, and comfortable accommodations. I afterwards learned that after the terrible cyclone which had overtaken

her, the crew had been certain she would sink and had left her in the boats.

For the first day or two of my sojourn on the *Sparhawk* I was as happy as a man could be under the circumstances. I thought myself to be perfectly safe, and believed it could not be long before I would be picked up. Of course I did not know my latitude and longitude, but I felt sure that the part of the Atlantic in which I was must be frequently crossed by steamers and other vessels.

About the fourth day I began to feel uneasy. I had seen but three sails, and these had taken no notice of the signal which I had hung as high in the mizzenmast as I had dared to climb. It was, indeed, no wonder that the signal had attracted no attention among the fluttering shreds of sails about it.

I believe that one ship at least approached quite near me. I had been below some time, looking over the books in the captain's room, and when I came on deck I saw the stern of the ship, perhaps a mile or two distant, sailing away. Of course my shouts and wavings were of no avail. She had probably recognized the derelict *Sparhawk* and had made a note of her present position, in order to report to the Hydrographic Office.

The weather had been fair for the most part of the time, the sea moderately smooth, and when the wind was strong the great sail on the mizzenmast, which remained hoisted, and which I had tightened up a little, acted after the manner of the long end of a weather-vane, and kept the ship's head to the sea.

Thus it will be seen that I was not in a bad plight,

but although I appreciated this, I grew more and more troubled and uneasy. For several days I had not seen a sail, and if I should see one, how could I attract attention? It must be that the condition of the vessel indicated that there was no one on board. Had I known that the *Sparhawk* was already entered upon the list of derelicts, I should have been hopeless indeed.

At first I hung out a lantern as a night signal, but on the second night it was broken by the wind, and I could find only one other in good condition. The ship's lights must have been blown away in the storm, together with her boats and much of her rigging. I would not hang out the only lantern left me, for fear it should come to grief, and that I should be left in the dark at night in that great vessel. Had I known that I was on a vessel which had been regularly relegated to the ranks of the forsaken, I should better have appreciated the importance of allowing passing vessels to see that there was a light on board the *Sparhawk*, and therefore, in all probability, a life.

As day after day passed, I became more and more disheartened. It seemed to me that I was in a part of the great ocean avoided by vessels of every kind, that I was not in the track of anything going anywhere. Every day there seemed to be less and less wind, and when I had been on board a week, the *Sparhawk* was gently rising and falling on a smooth sea in a dead calm. Hour after hour I swept the horizon with the captain's glass, but only once did I see anything to encourage me. This was what appeared like a long line of black smoke against the distant sky, which might have been left by a passing

steamer. But, were this the case, I never saw the steamer.

Happily, there were plenty of provisions on board of a plain kind. I found spirits and wine, and even medicines, and in the captain's room there were pipes, tobacco, and some books.

This comparative comfort gave me a new and strange kind of despair. I began to fear that I might become contented to live out my life alone in the midst of this lonely ocean. In that case, what sort of a man should I become?

It must have been about nine o'clock, judging by the sun, when I came on deck on the morning of the twenty-fifth of May. I had become a late riser, for what was the good of rising early when there was nothing to rise for? I had scarcely raised my eyes above the rail of the ship when, to my utter amazement, I perceived a vessel not a mile away. The sight was so unexpected, and the surprise was so great, that my heart almost stopped beating as I stood and gazed at her.

She was a medium-sized iron steamer, and lay upon the sea in a peculiar fashion, her head being much lower than her stern, the latter elevated so much that I could see part of the blades of her motionless propeller. She presented the appearance of a ship which was just about to plunge, bow foremost, into the depths of the ocean, or which had just risen, stern foremost, from those depths.

With the exception of her position, and the fact that no smoke-stack was visible, she seemed, to my eyes, to be in good enough trim. She had probably been in collision with something, and her forward

compartments had filled. Deserted by her crew, she had become a derelict, and, drifting about in her desolation, had fallen in with another derelict as desolate as herself. The fact that I was on board the *Sparhawk* did not, in my eyes, make that vessel any the less forsaken and forlorn.

The coming of this steamer gave me no comfort. Two derelicts, in their saddening effects upon the spirits, would be twice as bad as one, and, more than that, there was danger, should a storm arise, that they would dash into each other and both go to the bottom. Despairing as I had become, I did not want to go to the bottom.

As I gazed upon the steamer I could see that she was gradually approaching me. There was a little breeze this morning, and so much of her hull stood out of the water that it caught a good deal of the wind. The *Sparhawk*, on the contrary, was but little affected by the breeze, for, apart from the fact that the great sail kept her head always to the wind, she was heavily laden with sugar and molasses and sat deep in the water. The other was not coming directly toward me, but would probably pass at a considerable distance. I did not at all desire that she should come near the *Sparhawk*.

Suddenly my heart gave a jump. I could distinctly see on the stern of the steamer the flutter of something white. It was waved! Somebody must be waving it!

Hitherto I had not thought of the spy-glass, for with my naked eyes I could see all that I cared to see of the vessel; but now I dashed below to get it. When I brought it to bear upon the steamer I saw plainly

that the white object was waved by some one, and that that some one was a woman! I could see above the rail the upper part of her body, her uncovered head, her uplifted arm wildly waving.

Presently the waving ceased, and then the thought suddenly struck me that, receiving no response, she had in despair given up signalling. Cursing my stupidity, I jerked my handkerchief from my pocket, and, climbing a little way into the rigging, I began to wave it madly. Almost instantly her waving recommenced. I soon stopped signalling, and so did she. No more of that was needed. I sprang to the deck and took up the glass.

The woman was gone, but in a few moments she reappeared, armed with a glass. This action filled me with amazement. Could it be possible that the woman was alone on the steamer, and that there was no one else to signal and to look out? The thing was incredible, and yet, if there were men on board, why did they not show themselves, and why did not one of them wave the signal and use the glass?

The steamer was steadily but very slowly nearing the *Sparhawk*, when the woman removed the glass and stood up waist-high above the rail of the steamer. Now I could see her much better. I fancied I could almost discern her features. She was not old, she was well shaped, her bluish gray dress fitted her snugly. Holding the rail with one hand, she stood up very erect, which must have been somewhat difficult, considering the inclination of the deck. For a moment I fancied I had seen or known some one whose habit it was to stand up very erect, as this woman stood upon the steamer. The notion was banished as absurd.

Wondering what I should do, what instant action I should take, I laid down my glass, and as I did so the woman immediately put up hers. Her object was plain enough. She wanted to observe me, which she could not well do when a view of my face was obstructed by the glass and my outstretched arms. I was sorry that I had not sooner given her that opportunity, and for some moments I stood and faced her, waving my hat as I did so.

I was wild with excitement. What should I do? What could I do? There were no boats on the *Sparhawk*, and what had become of the one in which I reached her I did not know. Thinking of nothing but getting on board the vessel, I had forgotten to make the boat fast, and when I went to look for it a day or two afterwards it was gone. On the steamer, however, I saw a boat hanging from davits near the stern. There was hope in that.

But there might be no need for a boat. Under the influence of the gentle breeze, the steamer was steadily drawing nearer to the *Sparhawk*. Perhaps they might touch each other. But this idea was soon dispelled, for I could see that the wind would carry the steamer past me, although, perhaps, at no great distance. Then my hopes sprang back to the boat hanging from her davits.

But before these hopes could take shape the woman and her glass died out of sight behind the rail of the steamer. In about a minute she reappeared, stood up erect, and applied a speaking-trumpet to her mouth. It was possible that a high, shrill voice might have been heard from one vessel to the other, but it was plain enough that this was a woman who took no

useless chances. I, too, must be prepared to hail as well as to be hailed. Quickly I secured a speaking-trumpet from the captain's room, and stood up at my post.

Across the water came the monosyllable, "Ho!" and back I shouted, "Hallo!"

Then came these words, as clear and distinct as any I ever heard in my life: "Are you Mr. Rockwell?"

This question almost took away my senses. Was this reality, or had a spirit risen from this lonely ocean to summon me somewhere? Was this the way people died? Rockwell? Yes, my name was Rockwell. At least, it had been. I was sure of nothing now.

Again came the voice across the sea. "Why don't you answer?" it said.

I raised my trumpet to my lips. At first I could make no sound, but, controlling my agitation a little, I shouted: "Yes!"

Instantly the woman disappeared, and for ten minutes I saw her no more. During that time I did nothing but stand and look at the steamer, which was moving more slowly than before, for the reason that the wind was dying away. She was now, however, nearly opposite me, and so near that if the wind should cease entirely, conversation might be held without the aid of trumpets. I earnestly hoped this might be the case, for I had now recovered the possession of my senses, and greatly desired to hear the natural voice of that young woman on the steamer.

As soon as she reappeared I made a trial of the power of my voice. Laying down the trumpet, I shouted: "Who are you?"

Back came the answer, clear, high, and perfectly audible: "I am Mary Phillips."

Mary Phillips! It seemed to me that I remembered the name. I was certainly familiar with the erect attitude, and I fancied I recognized the features of the speaker. But this was all. I could not place her.

Before I could say anything she hailed again. "Don't you remember me?" she cried. "I lived in Forty-second Street."

The middle of a wild and desolate ocean and a voice from Forty-second Street! What manner of conjecture was this? I clasped my head in my hands and tried to think. Suddenly a memory came to me, a wild, surging, raging memory.

"With what person did you live in Forty-second Street?" I yelled across the water.

"Miss Bertha Nugent," she replied.

A fire seemed to blaze within me. Standing on tiptoe, I fairly screamed: "Bertha Nugent! Where is she?"

The answer came back: "Here!" And when I heard it my legs gave way beneath me and I fell to the deck. I must have remained for some minutes, half lying, half seated, on the deck. I was nearly stupefied by the statement I had heard.

I will now say a few words concerning Miss Bertha Nugent. She was a lady whom I had known well in New York, and who, for more than a year, I had loved well, although I never told her so. Whether or not she suspected my passion was a question about which I had never been able to satisfy myself. Sometimes I had one opinion, sometimes another. Before I had taken any steps to assure myself positively in

regard to this point, Miss Nugent went abroad with a party of friends, and for eight months I had neither seen nor heard from her.

During that time I had not ceased to berate myself for my inexcusable procrastination. As she went away without knowing my feelings toward her, of course there could be no correspondence. Whatever she might have suspected, or whatever she might have expected, there was nothing between us.

But, on my part, my love for Bertha had grown day by day. Hating the city and even the country where I had seen her and loved her and where now she was not, I travelled here and there, and during the winter went to the West Indies. There I had remained until the weather had become too warm for a longer sojourn, and then I had taken passage in the *Thespia* for New York. I knew that Bertha would return to the city in the spring or summer, and I wished to be there when she arrived. If, when I met her, I found her free, there would be no more delay. My life thenceforth would be black or white. And now here she was near me in a half-wrecked steamer on the wide Atlantic, with no companion, as I knew, but her maid, Mary Phillips.

I now had a very distinct recollection of Mary Phillips. In my visits to the Nugent household in Forty-second Street I had frequently seen this young woman. Two or three times, when Miss Nugent had not been at home, I had had slight interviews with her. She always treated me with a certain cordiality, and I had some reason to think that if Miss Nugent really suspected my feelings, Mary Phillips had given her some hints on the subject.

Mary Phillips was an exceedingly bright and quick young woman, and I am quite sure that she could see into the state of a man's feelings as well as any one. Bertha had mentioned some instances of her maid's facilities for adapting herself to circumstances, and I was now thankful from the bottom of my heart that Bertha had this woman with her.

I was recovering from the stupefaction into which my sudden emotions had plunged me, when a hail came across the water, first in Mary Phillips's natural voice, and then through a speaking-trumpet. I stood up and answered.

"I was wondering," cried Mary Phillips, "what had become of you. I thought perhaps you had gone down to breakfast."

In answer I called to her to tell me where Miss Nugent was, how she was, how she came to be in this surprising situation, and how many people there were on board the steamer.

"Miss Nugent has not been at all well," answered Mary, "but she brightened up as soon as I told her you were here. She cannot come on deck very well, because the pitch of the ship makes the stairs so steep. But I am going to give her her breakfast now, and after she has eaten something she may be stronger, and I will try to get her on deck."

Brightened up when she knew I was near! That was glorious! That brightened up creation.

By this time I needed food also, but I did not remain below to eat it. I brought my breakfast on deck, keeping my eyes all the time fixed upon Bertha's steamer. The distance between us did not seem to have varied. How I longed for a little breeze that

might bring us together! Bertha was on that vessel, trusting, perhaps, entirely to me. And what could I do if some breeze did not bring us together? I looked about for something on which I might float to her. But if I made a raft I was not sure that I could steer or propel it, and I might float away and become a third derelict. Once I thought of boldly springing into the water and swimming to her, but the distance was considerable, my swimming powers were only moderate, and there might be sharks. The risk was too great. But surely we would come together. Even if no kind wind arose, there was that strange attraction which draws to each other the bubbles on a cup of tea. If bubbles, why not ships?

It was not long before nearly one half of Mary Phillips appeared above the rail. "Miss Nugent has come on deck," she cried, "and she wants to see you. She can't stand up very long, because everything is so sliding."

Before my trembling lips could frame an answer, she had bobbed out of sight, and presently reappeared supporting another person, and that other person was Bertha Nugent.

I could discern her features perfectly. She was thinner and paler than when I had last seen her, but her beauty was all there. The same smile which I had seen so often was upon her face as she waved her handkerchief to me. I waved my hat in return, but I tried two or three times before I could speak loud enough for her to hear me. Then I threw into my words all the good cheer and hope that I could.

She did not attempt to answer, but smiled more brightly than before. Her expression seemed to indi-

cate that, apart from the extraordinary pleasure of meeting a friend on this waste of waters, she was glad that I was that friend.

"She can't speak loud enough for you to hear her," called out Mary Phillips, "but she says that now you are here she thinks everything will be all right. She wants to know if you are alone on your ship, and if you can come to us."

I explained my situation, but said I did not doubt but the two ships would gradually drift together. "Is there no one to lower your boat?" I asked.

"No one but me," answered Mary, "and I don't believe I am up to that sort of thing. Miss Nugent says I must not touch it, for fear I might fall overboard."

"Do you mean to say," I cried, "that there is nobody but you two on board that steamer?"

"No other living soul!" said Mary, "and I'll tell you how it all happened."

Then she told their story. The friends with whom Miss Nugent had travelled had determined to go to Egypt, but, as she did not wish to accompany them, she had remained in Spain and Algiers during the early spring, and, eleven days before, she and Mary Phillips had started from Marseilles for home in the steamer *La Fidélité*. Five days ago, the steamer had collided in the night with something, Mary did not know what, and her front part was filled with water. Everybody was sure that the vessel would soon sink, and the captain, crew, and passengers—all French—went away in boats.

"Is it possible," I yelled, "that they deserted you two women?"

Mary Phillips replied that this was not the case. They had been implored to go in the boats, but the night was dark, the sea was rough and pitchy, and she was sure the boat would upset before they had gone a hundred yards. Miss Nugent and she both agreed that it was much safer to remain on a large vessel like *La Fidélité*, even if she were half full of water, than to go out on the dark and stormy water in a miserable little shell of a boat. The captain got down on his knees and implored them to go, but they were resolute. He then declared that he would force them into the craft, but Mary Phillips declared that if he tried that she would shoot him. She had a pistol ready. Then, when they had all got in the boats but the captain, two of the men jumped on board again, threw their arms around him, and carried him off, vowing that he should not lose his life on account of a pair of senseless Americans. A boat would be left, the men said, which they might use if they chose. But, of course, this was more a piece of sentiment than anything else.

"And now you see," cried Mary Phillips, "I was right, and they were wrong. This steamer has not sunk, and I have no doubt but that every soul who went away in those boats is now at the bottom of the sea."

This was indeed a wonderful story. And the fact that Bertha Nugent was on board a derelict vessel, and should happen to fall in with me on board of another, was one of those events which corroborate the trite and hackneyed adage that truth is stranger than fiction.

It was surprising how plainly I could hear Mary

Phillips across the smooth, still water. The ships did not now seem to be moving at all. But soon they would be nearer, and then I could talk with Bertha. And soon after (it must be so) I would be with her.

I inquired if they had food and whatever else they needed, and Mary Phillips replied that, with the exception of the slanting position of the ship, they were very comfortable; that she did the cooking, and that Miss Nugent said that they lived a great deal better than when the ship's cook cooked.

Mary also informed me that she had arranged a very nice couch for Miss Nugent on the after deck; that she was lying there now, and felt better; that she wanted to know which I thought the safer ship of the two; and that as soon as a little wind arose, and the vessels were blown nearer each other, she wished to get up and talk to me herself.

I answered that I thought both the ships were safe enough, and I should be delighted to talk with Miss Nugent; but in my heart I could not believe that a vessel with her bow as low as that of *La Fidélité* could be safe in bad weather, to say nothing of the possibility, at any time, of the water bursting into other compartments of the ship. The *Sparhawk* I believed to be in much better condition. Despite the fact that she was utterly helpless as far as sailing qualities were concerned, the greater part of her masts and rigging being in a wretched condition, and her rudder useless, she did not appear to be damaged. I had no reason to believe that she leaked, and she floated well, although, as I have said, she lay rather deep in the water.

If the thing were possible, I intended to get Bertha

on board the *Sparhawk*, where there was hope that we could all remain safely until we were rescued. With this purpose in view, the moment Mary Phillips disappeared, I went below and prepared the captain's cabin for Bertha and her maid. I carried to the forward part of the vessel all the pipes, bottles, and glasses, and such other things as were not suitable for a lady's apartment, and thoroughly aired the cabin, making it as neat and comfortable as circumstances permitted. The very thought of offering hospitality to Bertha was a joy.

I proposed to myself several plans to be used in various contingencies. If the two vessels approached near enough, I would throw a line to *La Fidélité*, and Mary Phillips would make it fast, I knew. Then with a windlass I might draw the two vessels together. This being done I would spring on board the steamer, and, when I had transferred Bertha and Mary to the *Sparhawk*, I would cut loose *La Fidélité* to drift where she pleased.

It was possible that I might convey from one vessel to the other some articles of luxury or necessity, but on this point I would not come to any definite conclusion. I would consult Mary Phillips on the subject.

Another plan was that if we did not approach very close, I would endeavor to throw a long, light line to the steamer, and Mary Phillips would attach it to the boat which hung from the davits. Into this she would put a pair of oars, and lower it as well as she could; then I would haul it to the *Sparhawk*, row over to the steamer, and transfer Bertha and Mary to my vessel. It was possible that we should not have to be very

near each other for me to carry out this plan. Had I been a seaman, I might have thought of some other plans better than these. But I was not a seaman.

I did not waste any time in the cabin, although I was very desirous to make it as pleasant as possible for the reception of Bertha, but when I returned to the deck I was astonished to find that the steamer was farther away than it had been when I went below. There was a slight breeze from the east, which had nearly turned the *Sparhawk* about with her bow to the wind, but was gently carrying *La Fidélité* before it.

I seized the speaking-trumpet and with all my power hailed the steamer, and in return there came to me a single sound, the sound of the vowel O. I could see two handkerchiefs fluttering upon the stern. In ten minutes these were scarcely discernible.

Half crazed, I stood and gazed and gazed and gazed at the distant steamer. The wind died away, and I could perceive that she was not becoming more distant. Then I began to hope. Another wind might spring up which would bring her back.

In an hour or two the other wind did spring up. I felt it in my face, and slowly the *Sparhawk* turned her bow toward it, and, enrapturing sight! the steamer with my Bertha on board began to move slowly back to me!

The wind which was now blowing came from the southwest, and *La Fidélité*, which before had lain to the southward of the *Sparhawk*, was passing to the north of my vessel. Nearer and nearer she came, and my whole soul was engaged in the hope that she might not pass too far north.

But I felt certain that, unless the wind changed, the steamer would probably pass within hailing distance.

All went well, and I soon saw Mary Phillips on deck, speaking-trumpet in hand, and seizing my trumpet, I hailed them when we were near enough. I eagerly inquired after Bertha, and the high voice of Mary Phillips came across the water, telling me that Miss Nugent was not feeling at all well. This uncertain state of affairs was making her feel very nervous.

"Can she come on deck?" I cried. "Can she use a speaking-trumpet? If I could talk to her, I might encourage her."

"She needs it," answered Mary, "but she cannot speak through the trumpet. She tried it, and it made her head ache. She is here on deck, and I am going to help her stand up as soon as we get nearer. Perhaps she may be able to speak to you."

The two vessels were now near enough for a high-pitched conversation without the assistance of trumpets, and Mary Phillips assisted Bertha to the side of the steamer, where I could distinctly see her. I shouted as hearty a greeting as ever was sent across the water, bidding her to keep up a good heart, for help of some kind must surely come to us. She tried to answer me, but her voice was not strong enough. Then she shook her head, by which I understood that she did not agree with me in my hopeful predictions. I called back to her that in all this drifting about the two vessels must certainly come together, and then, with the assistance of the steamer's boat, we could certainly devise some way of getting out of this annoying plight. She smiled, apparently at the mildness of this expression, and again shook her head.

She now seemed tired, for her position by the rail was not an easy one to maintain, and her maid assisted her to her couch on the deck. Then stood up Mary Phillips, speaking loud and promptly.

"She has a message for you," she said, "which she wanted to give to you herself, but she cannot do it. She thinks—but I tell her it is of no use thinking that way—we are bound to be lost. You may be saved, because your ship seems in a better condition than ours. And she does not believe that the two vessels will ever come together. So she wants me to tell you that if you get home, and she never does, she wishes her share in the Forty-second Street house to go to her married sister, and to be used for the education of the children. She doesn't want it divided up in the ordinary way, because each one will get so little, and it will do no good. Do you think that will be a good will?"

"Don't speak of wills!" I shouted. "There is no need of a will. She will get home in safety and attend to her own affairs."

"I think so, too," cried Mary Phillips. "But I had to tell you what she said. And now she wants to know if you have any message to send to your parents, for we might blow off somewhere and be picked up, while this might not happen to you. But I don't believe in that sort of thing any more than in the other."

I shouted back my disbelief in the necessity of any such messages, when Mary Phillips seized her trumpet and cried that she did not hear me.

Alas! the breeze was still blowing, and the steamer was moving away to the northeast. Through my

trumpet I repeated my words, and then Mary said something I could not hear. The wind was against her. I shouted to her to speak louder, and she must have screamed with all her force, but I could only hear some words to the effect that we were bound to come together again, and she waved her handkerchief cheerily.

Then the steamer moved farther and farther away, and speaking-trumpets were of no avail. I seized the glass, and watched *La Fidélité* until she was nothing but a black spot upon the sea.

The wind grew lighter, and finally died away, and the black spot remained upon the horizon. I did not take my eyes from it until night drew on and blotted it out. I had not thought of advising Mary Phillips to hang out a light, and she was probably not sufficiently accustomed to the ways of ships to think of doing it herself, although there could be no doubt that there were lanterns suitable for the purpose on the steamer. Had there been a light upon that vessel, I should have watched the glimmer all night. As it was, I slept upon the deck, waking frequently to peer out into the darkness, and to listen for a hail from a speaking-trumpet.

In the morning there was a black spot upon the horizon. I fancied that it was a little nearer than when I last saw it. But in the course of the forenoon it faded away altogether. Then despair seized upon me, and I cared not whether I lived or died. I forgot to eat, and threw myself upon the deck, where I remained for several hours, upbraiding myself for my monstrous, unpardonable folly in neglecting the opportunities which were now lost.

Over and over again I told myself bitterly that

when I had been near enough to the vessel which bore Bertha Nugent to converse with Mary Phillips without the aid of a speaking-trumpet, I should have tried to reach that vessel, no matter what the danger or the difficulties. I should have launched a raft—I should have tried to swim—I should have done something!

More than that, even had it been impossible for me to reach the steamer, I should have endeavored to reach Bertha's heart. I should have told her that I loved her. Whether she were lost, or I were lost, or both of us, she should have known I loved her. She might not have been able to answer me, but she could have heard me. For that terrible mistake, that crime, there was no pardon. Now every chance was gone. What reason was there to suppose that these two derelicts ever again would drift together?

In the afternoon I rose languidly and looked about me. I saw something on the horizon, and seizing the glass, I knew it to be *La Fidélité*. I could recognize the slant of the hull, of the masts.

Now hope blazed up again. If she were nearer, she must come nearer still. I recovered my ordinary state of mind sufficiently to know that I was hungry, and that I must eat to be strong and ready for what might happen.

Upon one thing I was determined: if Bertha should ever again be brought near enough to hear me, I would tell her that I loved her. The object of life, however much of it might be left me, should be to make Bertha know that I loved her. If I swam toward the vessel, or floated on a plank, I must get near enough to tell her that I loved her.

But there was no wind, and the apparent size of

the steamer did not increase. This was a region or season of calms or fitful breezes. During the rest of the day the distant vessel continued to be a black speck upon the smooth and gently rolling sea. Again I spent the night on deck, but I did not wake to listen or watch. I was worn out and slept heavily.

The day was bright when I was awakened by a chilly feeling. A strong breeze was blowing over me. I sprang to my feet. There was quite a heavy sea. The vessel was rolling and pitching beneath me, and not far away, not more than a mile, *La Fidélité* was coming straight toward me. Lightly laden, and with a great part of her hull high out of water, the high wind was driving her before it, while my vessel, her bow to the breeze, was moving at a much slower rate.

As I looked at the rapidly approaching steamer, it seemed as if she certainly must run into the *Sparhawk*. But for that I cared not. All that I now hoped for was that Bertha should come to me. Whether one vessel sank, or the other, or whether both went down together, I should be with Bertha—I would live or die with her.

Mary Phillips stood full in view on the stern of the oncoming steamer, a speaking-trumpet in her hand. I could now see that it was not probable that the two vessels would collide. The steamer would pass me, but probably very near. Before I could make up my mind what I should do in this momentous emergency, Mary Phillips hailed me.

"When we get near enough," she shouted, "throw me a rope. I'll tie it to the boat and cut it loose."

Wildly I looked about me for a line which I might throw. Cordage there was in abundance, but it was

broken or fastened to something, or too heavy to handle. I remembered, however, seeing a coil of small rope below, and hastening down, I brought it on deck, took the coil in my right hand, and stood ready to hurl it when the proper moment should come.

That moment came quickly. The steamer was not a hundred feet from me when I reached the deck. It passed me on the port side.

"Be ready!" cried Mary Phillips, the instant she saw me. It was not now necessary to use a trumpet. "Throw as soon as I get opposite to you!" she cried.

"Is Bertha well?" I shouted.

"Yes!" said Mary Phillips. "But what you've got to do is to throw that rope. Give it a good heave. Throw now!"

The two vessels were not forty feet apart. With all my strength I hurled the coil of rope. The steamer's stern was above me, and I aimed high. The flying coil went over the deck of *La Fidélité*, but in my excitement I forgot to grasp tightly the other end of it, and the whole rope flew from me and disappeared beyond the steamer. Stupefied by this deplorable accident, I staggered backward, and a heave of the vessel threw me against the rail. Recovering myself, I glared about for another rope, but of course there was none.

Then came a shout from Mary Phillips. But she had already passed me, and as I was to the windward of her I did not catch her words. As I remembered her appearance, she seemed to be tearing her hair. In a flash I thought of my resolution. Rushing to the rail, I put the trumpet to my mouth. The wind

would carry my words to her, if it would not bring hers to me.

"Tell Bertha to come on deck!" I shouted. Mary Phillips looked at me, but did not move. I wished her to rush below and bring up Bertha. Not an instant was to be lost. But she did not move.

"Tell her I love her!" I yelled through the trumpet. "Tell her I love her now, and shall love her forever. Tell her I love her, no matter what happens. Tell her I love her, I love her, I love her!" And this I continued to scream until it was plain I was no longer heard. Then I threw down my useless trumpet and seized the glass. Madly I scanned the steamer. No sign of Bertha was to be seen. Mary Phillips was there, and now she waved her handkerchief. At all events, she forgave me. At such a terrible moment what could one do but forgive?

I watched and watched and watched, but no figure but that of Mary Phillips appeared upon the steamer, and at last I could not even distinguish that. Now I became filled with desperate fury. I determined to sail after Bertha and overtake her. A great sail was flapping from one of my masts, and I would put my ship about, and the strong wind should carry me to Bertha.

I knew nothing of sailing, but even if I had known, all my efforts would have been useless. I rushed to the wheel and tried to move it, pulling it this way and that; but the rudder was broken or jammed—I know not what had happened to it. I seized the ropes attached to the boom of the sail. I pulled, I jerked, I hauled. I did not know what I was doing. I did nothing. At last, in utter despair and exhaustion, I fell to the deck.

But soon the wind almost died away, and in the afternoon the sea became perfectly calm, and when the sun set I could plainly see the steamer on the far-off edge of the glistening water. During the whole of the next day I saw her. She neither disappeared nor came nearer. Sometimes I was in the depths of despair, sometimes I began to hope a little. But I had one great solace in the midst of my misery: Bertha knew that I loved her. I was positively sure that my words had been heard.

It was a strange manner in which I had told my love. I had roared my burning words of passion through a speaking-trumpet, and I had told them not to Bertha herself, but to Mary Phillips. But the manner was of no importance. Bertha now knew I loved her. That was everything to me.

As long as light remained I watched *La Fidélité* through the glass, but I could see nothing but a black form with a slanting upper line. She was becalmed, as I was. Why could she not have been becalmed near me? I dared not let my mind rest upon the opportunities I had lost when she had been becalmed near me. During the night the wind must have risen again, for the *Sparhawk* rolled and dipped a good deal, troubling my troubled slumbers. Very early in the morning I was awakened by what sounded like a distant scream. I did not know whether it was a dream or not, but I hurried on deck. The sun had not risen, but as I looked about I saw something which took away my breath, which made me wonder if I were awake, or dreaming, or mad.

It was Bertha's steamer within hailing distance!

Above the rail I saw the head and body of Mary

Phillips, who was screaming through the trumpet. I stood and gazed in petrified amazement.

I could not hear what Mary Phillips said. Perhaps my senses were benumbed. Perhaps the wind was carrying away her words. That it was blowing from me toward her soon became too evident. The steamer was receding from the *Sparhawk*. The instant I became aware of this my powers of perception and reasoning returned to me with a burning flash.

Bertha was going away from me—she was almost gone.

Snatching my trumpet, I leaned over the rail and shouted with all my might: "Did you hear me say I loved her? Did you tell her?"

Mary Phillips had put down her trumpet, but now she raised it again to her mouth, and I could see that she was going to make a great effort. The distance between us had increased considerably since I came on deck, and she had to speak against the wind.

With all the concentrated intensity which high-strung nerves could give to a man who is trying to hear the one thing to him worth hearing in the world, I listened. Had a wild beast fixed his claws and teeth into me at the moment, I would not have withdrawn my attention.

I heard the voice of Mary Phillips, faint, far away. I heard the words, "Yes, but—" and the rest was lost. She must have known from my aspect that her message did not reach me, for she tried again and again to make herself heard.

The wind continued to blow, and the steamer continued to float and float and float away. A wind had come up in the night. It had blown Bertha near me.

Perhaps it had blown her very near me. She had not known it, and I had not known it. Mary Phillips had not known it until it was too late, and now that wind had blown her past me and was blowing her away. For a time there was a flutter of a handkerchief, but only one handkerchief, and then *La Fidélité*, with Bertha on board, was blown away until it disappeared, and I never saw it again.

All night I sat upon the deck of the *Sparhawk*, thinking, wondering, and conjecturing. I was in a strange state of mind. I did not wonder or conjecture whether Bertha's vessel would come back to me again. I did not think of what I should do if it did come back. I did not think of what I should do if it never came back. All night I thought, wondered, and conjectured what Mary Phillips had meant by the word "but."

It was plain to me what "yes" had meant. My message had been heard, and I knew Mary Phillips well enough to feel positively sure that having received such a message under such circumstances she had given it to Bertha. Therefore I had positive proof that Bertha knew I loved her. But what did the "but" mean?

It seemed to me there were a thousand things that this word might mean. It might mean that she was already engaged to be married. It might mean that she had vowed never to marry. It might mean that she disapproved of such words at such a time. I cannot repeat the tenth of the meanings which I thought I might attach to this word. But the worst thing that it could purport, the most terrible signification of all, recurred to me over and over again. It

might mean that Bertha could not return my affection. She knew that I loved her, but she could not love me.

In the morning I ate something and then lay down upon the deck to sleep. It was well that I should do this, I thought, because if Bertha came near me again in the daytime Mary Phillips would hail me if I were not awake. All night long I would watch, and, as there was a moon, I would see Bertha's vessel if it came again.

I did watch all that afternoon and all that night, and during my watching I never ceased to wonder and conjecture what Mary Phillips meant by that word "but."

About the middle of the next day I saw in the distance something upon the water. I first thought it a bit of spray, for it was white, but as there were now no waves there could be no spray. With the glass I could only see that it was something white shining in the sun. It might be the glistening body of a dead fish. After a time it became plainer to me. It was such a little object that the faint breezes which occasionally arose had more influence upon the *Sparhawk* than upon it, and so I gradually approached it.

In about an hour I made out that it was something round, with something white raised above it, and then I discovered that it was a life-preserver, which supported a little stick, to which a white flag, probably a handkerchief, was attached. Then I saw that on the life-preserver lay a little yellow mass.

Now I knew what it was that I saw. It was a message from Bertha. Mary Phillips had devised the means of sending it. Bertha had sent it.

The life-preserver was a circular one, and I supposed that, in the centre of this, Mary had secured a stick in an upright position. She had then fastened a handkerchief to the top of the stick. Bertha had written a message, and Mary had wrapped it in a piece of oiled silk and fastened it to the life-preserver. She had then lowered this contrivance to the surface of the water, hoping that it would float to me or I would float to it.

I was floating to it. It contained the solution of all my doubts, the answer to all my conjectures. It was Bertha's reply to my declaration of love, and I was drifting slowly but surely toward it. Soon I would know.

But after a time the course of the *Sparhawk* or the course of the message changed. I drifted to the north. Little by little my course deviated from the line on which I might have met the message. At last I saw that I should never meet it. When I became convinced of this, my first impulse was to spring overboard and swim for it. But I restrained this impulse, as I had restrained others like it. If Bertha came back, I must be ready to meet her. I must run no risks, for her sake and my sake. She must find me on the *Sparhawk* if she should come back. She had left me and she had come back. She might come back again. Even to get her message I must not run the risk of missing her. So, with yearning heart and perhaps tearful eyes, I watched the little craft disappear and become another derelict.

I do not know how many days and nights I watched and waited for Bertha's ship, and wondered and conjectured what Mary Phillips meant by "but." I was

awake so much, ate so little, and thought so hard that I lost strength, both of mind and body. All I asked of my body was to look out for Bertha's steamer, and all that I asked of my mind was to resolve the meaning of the last words I had heard from that vessel.

One day, I do not know whether it was in the morning or afternoon, I raised my head, and on the horizon I saw a steamer. Quick as a flash my glass was brought to bear upon it. In the next minute my arms dropped, the telescope fell into my lap, my head dropped. It was not Bertha's steamer. It was an ordinary steamer, with its deck parallel with the water, and a long line of smoke coming out of its funnel. The shock of the disappointment was very great.

When I looked up again I could see that the steamer was headed directly toward me, and was approaching with considerable rapidity. But this fact affected me little. It would not bring me Bertha. It would not bring me any message from her. It was an ordinary vessel of traffic. I took no great interest in it, one way or the other.

Before long it was so near that I could see people on board. I arose and looked over the rail. Then some one on the steamer fired a gun or a pistol. As this seemed to be a signal, I waved my hat. Then the steamer began to move more slowly, and soon lay to and lowered a boat.

In ten minutes three men stood on the deck of the *Sparhawk*. Some one had hailed me in English to lower something. I had lowered nothing, but here they were on deck. They asked me a lot of questions, but I answered none of them.

"Is your captain with you?" I said. They answered that he was not, that he was on the steamer. "Then take me to him," said I.

"Of course we will," said their leader, with a smile. And they took me.

I was received on the steamer with much cordiality and much questioning, but to none of it did I pay any attention. I addressed the captain.

"Sir," said I, "I will be obliged to you if you will immediately cruise to the southwest and pick up for me a life-preserver with a little white flag attached to it. It also carries a message for me, wrapped up in a piece of oiled silk. It is very important that I should obtain that message without delay."

The captain laughed. "Why, man!" said he, "what are you thinking of? Do you suppose that I can go out of my course to cruise after a life-preserver?"

I looked at him with scorn. "Unmanly fiend!" said I.

Another officer now approached, whom I afterwards knew to be the ship's doctor.

"Come, come, now," he said, "don't let us have any hard words. The captain is only joking. Of course he will steam after your life-preserver, and no doubt will come up with it very soon. In the meantime you must come below and have something to eat and drink and rest yourself."

Satisfied with this assurance, I went below, was given food and medicine, and was put into a berth, where I remained for four days in a half-insensible condition, knowing nothing, caring for nothing.

When I came on deck again I was very weak, but

I had regained my senses, and the captain and I talked rationally together. I told him how I had come on board the *Sparhawk*, and how I had fallen in with the *La Fidélité*, half wrecked, having on board a dear friend of mine. In answer to his questions I described the details of the communications between the two vessels, and could not avoid mentioning the wild hopes and heart-breaking disappointments of that terrible time. But, somewhat to my languid surprise, the captain asked no questions regarding these subjects. I finished by thanking him for having taken me from the wreck, but added that I felt like a false-hearted coward for having deserted upon the sea the woman I loved, who now would never know my fate, nor I hers.

"Don't be too sure of that," said the captain, "for you are about to hear from her now."

I gazed at him in blank amazement. "Yes," said the captain, "I have seen her, and she has sent me to you. But I see you are all knocked into a heap, and I will make the story as short as I can. This vessel of mine is bound from Liverpool to La Guayra, and on the way down we called at Lisbon. On the morning of the day I was to sail from there, there came into port the *Glanford*, a big English merchantman, from Buenos Ayres to London. I know her skipper, Captain Guy Chesters, as handsome a young English sailor as ever stood upon a deck.

"In less than an hour from the time we dropped anchor, Captain Guy was on my vessel. He was on the lookout, he said, for some craft bound for South America or the West Indies, and was delighted to find me there. Then he told me that, ten days before, he

had taken two ladies from a half-wrecked French steamer, and that they had prayed and besought him to cruise about and look for the *Sparhawk*, a helpless ship with a friend of theirs alone on board.

"'You know,' said Captain Guy to me, 'I couldn't do that, for I'd lost time enough already, and the wind was very light and variable; so all I could do was to vow to the ladies that when we got to Lisbon we'd be bound to find a steamer going south, and that she could easily keep a lookout for the *Sparhawk*, and take off the friend.' I remarked that it was a big contract he had marked out for the steamer going south, and told him that the *Sparhawk* is an old derelict, which I sighted on my voyage north, and sent in a report of her position, and there couldn't have been anybody on board of her then. 'Can't say,' said Captain Guy. 'From what I can make out, this fellow must have boarded her a good while after she was abandoned, and seems to have been lying low after that.' Was that so, sir? Did you lie low?"

I made no answer. My whole soul was engaged in the comprehension of the fact that Bertha had sent for me. "Go on!" I cried.

"All right," said he. "I ought not to keep you waiting. I promised Captain Guy I would keep a lookout for the *Sparhawk*, and take you off if you were on board. I promised the quicker because my conscience was growling at me for having, perhaps, passed a fellow-being on an abandoned vessel. But I had heard of the *Sparhawk* before. I had sighted her, and so didn't keep a very sharp lookout for living beings aboard. Then Captain Guy took me on board his ship to see the two ladies, for they wanted to give me

instructions themselves. And I tell you what, sir, you don't often see two prettier women on board ship, nor anywhere else, for that matter. Captain Guy told me that before I saw them. He was in great spirits about his luck. He is the luckiest fellow in the merchant service. Now, if I had picked up two people that way, it would have been two old men. But he gets a couple of lovely ladies. That's the way the world goes. The ladies made me pretty nigh swear that I'd never set foot on shore till I found you. I would have been glad enough to stay there all day and make promises to those women. But my time was short, and I had to leave them to Captain Guy. So I did keep a lookout for the *Sparhawk*, and heard of her from two vessels coming north, and finally fell in with you. And a regular lunatic you were when I took you on board. But that's not to be wondered at, and you seem to be all right now."

"Did you not bring me any message from them?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, lots," said the captain. "Let me see if I can remember some of them." Then he knit his brows and tapped his head, and repeated some very commonplace expressions of encouragement and sympathy.

The effect of these upon me was very different from what the captain had expected. I had hoped for a note, a line—anything direct from Bertha. If she had written something which would explain the meaning of those last words from Mary Phillips, whether that explanation were favorable or otherwise, I would have been better satisfied. But now my terrible suspense must continue.

"Well," said the captain, "you don't seem cheered up much by word from your friends. I was too busy looking at them to catch rightly everything they said, but I know they told me they were going to London in the *Glanford*. This I remember, because it struck me what a jolly piece of good luck it all was for Captain Guy."

"And for what port are you bound?" I asked.

"La Guayra," he said. "It isn't a very good time of the year to go there, but I don't doubt you can find some vessel or other there that will take you north, so you're all right."

I was not all right. Bertha was saved, I was saved, but I had received no message. I knew nothing, and I was going away from her.

Two or three days after this, the captain came to me and said: "Look here, young man, you seem to be in the worst kind of doleful dumps. People who have been picked up in the middle of the ocean don't generally look like that. I wonder if you're not a little love-sick on account of a young woman on the *Glanford*."

I made no answer. I would not rebuke him, for he had saved my life, but this was a subject which I did not wish to discuss with a sea-captain.

"If that's really what's the matter with you," said he, "I can give you a piece of advice which will do you good, if you take it. I think you told me that you are not engaged to this lady,"—I nodded,—"and that you never proposed to her except through a speaking-trumpet." I allowed silence to make assent. "Well, now, my advice is to give her up, to drop all thoughts of her, and to make up your mind to tackle

on to some other girl when you find one that is good enough. You haven't the least chance in the world with this one. Captain Guy is mad in love with her. He told me so himself. And when he's out and out in love with a girl he's bound to get her. When I was with him he might have been married once a month if he'd chosen to, but he didn't choose. Now he does choose, and I can tell you that he's not going to make love through a speaking-trumpet. He'll go straight at it, and he'll win, too. There's every reason why he should win. In the first place, he's one of the handsomest fellows, and I don't doubt one of the best love-makers, that you would be likely to meet on land or sea. And then again, she has every reason to be grateful to him and to look on him as a hero."

I listened without a word. The captain's reasoning seemed to me very fallacious.

"You don't know it," said he, "but Captain Guy did a good deal more than pick up those two women from an abandoned vessel. You see, he was making his way north with a pretty fair wind from the southwest, the first they'd had for several days, and when his lookout sighted *La Fidélité* nobody on board thought for a minute that he would try to beat up to her, for she lay a long way to the west of his course, though pretty well in sight.

"But Captain Guy has sharp eyes and a good glass, and he vowed he could see something on the wreck that looked like a handkerchief waved by a woman. He told me this himself, as we were walking from my ship to his. Everybody laughed at him and wanted to know if women waved handkerchiefs different from other people.

"They said any bit of canvas might wave like that, and that it was plain enough the vessel was abandoned. If it was not, it could be, for there was a boat still hanging to one of its davits. Captain Guy paid no attention to this, but spied a little longer. Then he vowed that he was going to make for the vessel. There was one of the owners on board, and he up and forbid Captain Guy to do it. He told him that they had been delayed enough on the voyage by light winds, and that even now they would be overdue at their port a good many days before they got there. Every day lost, he said, was money lost to the owners. He had never heard of any skipper undertaking a piece of tomfoolery like this. It would take all day to beat up to that wreck, and when they reached it they would find an old derelict, which was no more than they could see now. And as for there being a woman on board, that was all stuff. The skipper had woman on the brain.

"To this Captain Guy answered that he didn't own the ship, but he commanded her, and as long as he commanded this vessel or any other, he was not going to pass a wreck when there were good reasons to believe there was a human being on board of it, and, in spite of what anybody said, his eyes told him there was reason to believe that there was somebody waving on that wreck. So he ordered the ship put about, paying no attention to the cursing and swearing of the owner, and beat against a wind that was getting lighter and lighter for over four hours until he reached the French steamer and took off the two ladies.

"There was nobody on board the *Glanford* that

thinks Captain Guy will ever sail that ship again. And in fact he doesn't think so himself. But said he to me: 'If I can marry that girl, the ship can go. If I can't get another ship, I can sail under a skipper. But there's no other girl in the world like this one.'

"And so you see, sir," he continued, "there isn't the least chance in the world for you. Captain Guy's got her on board his ship. He's with her by sunlight and starlight. He's lost his ship for her and he wants to marry her. And on the other hand, it'll be weeks and weeks, and perhaps months, before you can see her, or write to her either, as like as not, and long before that Captain Guy will have his affair settled, and there isn't any reason in my mind to doubt which way it will settle. And so you just take my advice, sir, and stop drawing such a long face. There are plenty of good girls in the world. No reason why you shouldn't get one. But if you are moping for the one that Captain Guy's got his heart set on, I'm afraid you'll end by being as much out of your head as you were when I found you."

To all this I made no answer, but walked gloomily toward the stern and looked down into the foaming wake. I think I heard the captain tell one of the men to keep an eye on me.

When we reached La Guayra—and the voyage seemed to me a never-ending one—I immediately set about finding a vessel bound for England. My captain advised me to go up on the mountains and wait until a steamer should sail for New York, which event might be expected in two or three weeks. America would be much better for me, he thought, than would England. But I paid no attention to him, and as

there was nothing in port that would sail for England, I took passage in a Spanish steamer bound for Barcelona. Arriving there, after a passage long enough to give me plenty of time for the consideration of the last two words I heard from Mary Phillips, and of the value of the communications I had received regarding Captain Guy Chesters, I immediately started by rail for London. On this journey I found that what I had heard concerning the rescue of my Bertha had had a greater effect upon me than I had supposed. Trains could not go fast enough for me. I was as restless as a maniac. I may have looked like one.

Over and over I tried to quiet myself by comforting reflections, saying to myself, for instance, that if the message which Bertha had sent floating on the sea to me had not been a good one, she would not have sent it. Feel as she might, she could not have been so hard-hearted as to crush the hopes of a man who, like herself, might soon lie in a watery grave. But then, there was that terrible word "but." Looked at in certain lights, what could be more crushing or heart-breaking than that?

And then again, Mary Phillips may not have understood what I said to her through the speaking-trumpet. A grim humor of despair suggested that at that distance, and in that blustering wind, the faithful maid-servant might have thought that, instead of shouting that I loved my Bertha, I was asking her if they had plenty of salt pork and hardtack. It was indeed a time of terrible suspense.

I did not know Bertha's address in England. But I knew she had friends in London and others in the country, and I was sure I would find her if

she were on the island. I arrived in London very early in the morning, too early to expect to find open any of the banking-houses or other places where Americans would be likely to register. Unable to remain inactive, I took a cab and drove to the London docks.

I went to inquire the whereabouts of Captain Guy Chesters.

This plan of action was almost repulsive to me, but I felt that it offered an opportunity I should not neglect. I would certainly learn about Bertha if I saw him, and whether it would be anything good or anything bad, I ought to know it.

In making my inquiries the cabman was of much assistance to me, and after having been referred from one person to another, I at last found a man, first mate of a vessel in the docks, who knew Captain Chesters, and could tell me all about him.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I can tell you where to find Captain Chesters. He's on shore, for he doesn't command the *Glanford* now, and, as far as I know, he hasn't signed articles yet either as skipper or mate in any other craft. The fact is, he's engaged in business which I suppose he thinks better than sailing the sea. He was married about a month ago. It's only two or three days since he's got back from a little land trip they took on the Continent. I saw him yesterday. He's the happiest man alive. But it's as like as not that he's ready for business now that he's got through with his honeymoon, and if it's a skipper you're looking for, you can't find a better man than Captain Guy, not about these docks."

I stood and looked at the man without seeing him,

and then in a hollow voice asked: "Where does he live?"

"A hundred and nine Lisbury Street, Calistoy Road, East. Now that I've told you, I wish I hadn't. You look as though you were going to measure him for a coffin."

"Thank you," said I, and walked away.

I told the cabman to drive me to the address I had received, and in due time we arrived in front of a very good-looking house, in a quiet and respectable street.

I was in a peculiar state of mind. I had half expected the terrible shock, and I had received it. But I had not been stunned. I had been roused to an unusual condition of mental activity. My senses were sharpened by the torment of my soul, and I observed everything—the quarter of the city, the street, the house.

The woman who opened the door started a little when she saw me. I asked for Mrs. Captain Chesters, and walked in without waiting to be told whether the lady was in or not. The woman showed me into a little parlor, and left me. Her manner plainly indicated that she suspected something was the matter with me.

In a very short time a tall, well-made man, with curly brown hair, a handsome sun-browned face, and that fine presence which command at sea frequently gives, entered the room.

"I understand, sir," said he, "that you asked for my wife, but I thought it better to come to you myself. What is your business with her, sir, and what is your name?"

"My name is Charles Rockwell," I said, "and my

business is to see her. If she has already forgotten my name, you can tell her that I kept company with her for a while on the Atlantic Ocean, when she was in one wreck and I was in another."

"Good heavens!" cried the young sailor. "Do you mean to say that you are the man who was on the derelict *Sparhawk*? And were you picked up by Captain Stearns, whom I sent after you? I supposed he would have written to me about you."

"I came faster than a letter would come," I answered. "Can I see her?"

"Of course you can!" cried Captain Guy. "I never knew a man so talked about as you have been since I fell in with the wreck of that French steamer! By George! sir, there was a time when I was dead jealous of you. But I'm married tight and fast now, and that sort of thing is done with. Of course you shall see her."

He left the room, and presently I heard the sound of running footsteps. The door was opened, and Mary Phillips entered, closely followed by the captain. I started back. I shouted as if I had a speaking-trumpet to my mouth.

"What!" I cried, "is this your wife?"

"Yes," said Captain Guy, stepping forward, "of course she is. Why not?"

I made no answer, but with open arms I rushed upon Mary Phillips and folded her in a wild embrace. I heard a burst of nautical oaths, and probably would have been felled by a nautical fist had not Mary screamed to her husband.

"Stop, Guy!" she cried. "I understand him. It's all right. He's so glad to see me."

I released her from my embrace, and, staggering back, sank upon a chair.

"Go get him a glass of sherry, Guy," she said, and wheeling up a great easy-chair, she told me to sit in it, for I looked dreadfully tired. I took the chair, and when the wine was brought I drank it.

"Where is Miss Nugent?" I asked.

"Miss Nugent is all right," said Mary Phillips, "but I'm not going to tell you a word about her or anything else until you've had some breakfast. I know you have not tasted food this day."

I admitted that I had not. I would eat, I would do anything, so that afterwards she would tell me about Bertha.

When I had had a cup of coffee and some toast, which Mary brought to me upon a tray, I arose from my chair.

"Now tell me quickly," I said, "where is Bertha?"

"Not a bit of it," said Mary Phillips—I call her so, for I shall never know her by any other name. "Sit down again, Mr. Rockwell, and eat these two eggs. When you have done that I will talk to you about her. You needn't be in a hurry to go to see her, because in the house where she is the people are not up yet."

"Might as well sit down and eat," said the captain, laughing. "When you're under command of this skipper you will find that her orders are orders, and the quicker you step up and obey them, the better. So I would advise you to eat your eggs."

I began to do so, and Captain Guy laughed a mighty laugh. "She's a little thing," he said, "but she does know how to make men stand about. I didn't believe

there was a person in this world who could have kept my hands off you when I saw you hugging my wife. But she did it, and I tell you, sir, I was never worse cut up in my whole life than I was when I saw you do that."

"Sir," said I, looking at him steadfastly, "if I have caused you any pain, any misery, any torment of the soul, any anguish of heart, any agony of jealousy, or mental torture of any kind, I am heartily glad of it, for all of these things you have brought on me."

"Good!" cried Mary Phillips. "You must be feeling better, sir, and when you have entirely finished breakfast we will go on and talk."

In a few moments I pushed away the tray, and Mary, looking at it, declared herself satisfied, and placed it on a side-table.

"So you really supposed, sir," she said, sitting near me, "that Captain Chesters married Miss Nugent?"

"I certainly did," I answered.

"No doubt thinking," said Mary, with a smile, "that no man in his senses would marry anybody else when Miss Nugent was about, which was a very proper opinion, of course, considering your state of mind."

"And let me say, sir," said Captain Guy, "if I had married Miss Nugent, more people than you would have been dissatisfied. I would have been one of them, and I am sure Miss Nugent would have been another."

"Count me as one of that party," said Mary Phillips. "And now, Mr. Rockwell, you shall not be kept waiting a moment longer."

"Of course she is safe and well," I said, "or you would not be here. And before you say anything

more about her, please tell me what you meant by that terrible word 'but.'"

"'But'?" repeated Mary Phillips, with a puzzled expression.

And Captain Guy echoed, "'But'? What 'but'?"

"It was the last word I heard from you," said I. "You shouted it to me when your vessel was going away for the last time. It has caused me a world of misery. It may have been followed by other words, but I did not catch them. I asked you if you had told her that I loved her, and you answered, 'Yes, but—'"

Captain Guy slapped his leg. "By George!" he said, "that was enough to put a man on the rack. Mary, you should have told him more than that."

Mary Phillips wrinkled her forehead and gazed steadfastly into her lap. Suddenly she looked up.

"I remember it," she said. "I remember exactly what I answered, or tried to answer. I said, 'Yes, but she knew it before.'"

I sprang to my feet. "What do you mean?" I cried.

"Of course she knew it," she said. "We both must have been very stupid if we hadn't known that. We knew it before we left New York. And, for my part, I wondered why you didn't tell her. But as you never mentioned it, of course it wasn't for us to bring up the subject."

"Bertha knew I loved her!" I ejaculated. "And what—and how—what did she say of it? What did she think of it?"

"Well," said Mary Phillips, laughing, "I could never see that she doubted it. I could never see that

she objected to it. In fact, from what she said,—and being just us two, of course she had to say a good many things to me,—I think she was very glad to find out that you knew it as well as we did."

"Mary Phillips," I cried, "where is she? Tell me this moment!"

"Look here," said Captain Guy, "you're leaving me out of this business altogether. This is Mrs. Mary Chesters."

"Mr. Rockwell will be all right when he gets over this flurry," said Mary to her husband.

I acknowledged the correction with a nod, for I had no time then for words on the subject.

"Don't get yourself flustered, sir," said Mary. "You can't go to her yet. It's too early. You must give the family time to come down and have breakfast. I am not going to be party to a scene before breakfast nor in the middle of a meal. I know the ways and manners of that house, and I'll send you at exactly the right time."

I sat down. "Mary—Mrs.—"

"Don't bother about names just now," she interrupted. "I know who you're speaking to."

"Do you believe," I continued, looking steadfastly at her, "that Bertha Nugent loves me?"

"I don't know," she said, "that it's exactly my business to give this information, but under the circumstances I take it on myself to say that she most certainly does. And I tell you, and you may tell her if you like, that I would not have said this to you if I hadn't believed this thing ought to be clenched the minute there was a chance to do it. It's been hanging off and on long enough. Love you? Why, bless my

soul, sir, she's been thinking of nothing else for the past two or three days but the coming of the postman, expecting a letter from you, not considering that you didn't know where to address her, or that it was rather scant time for a letter to come from La Guayra, where Captain Stearns would take you if he succeeded in picking you up."

"The whole affair had a scanty air about it," said Captain Guy. "At least, that's the way I look at it."

"You've never said anything like that before," said Mary, rather sharply.

"Of course not," replied the captain. "I wanted to keep you as merry and cheerful as I could. And besides, I didn't say I had thought there was no chance of Mr. Rockwell's turning up. I only said I considered it a little scantish."

"Love you?" continued Mary Phillips. "I should say so. I should have brought her on deck to wave her handkerchief to you and kiss her hand, perhaps, when you blew the state of your feelings through a trumpet. But she wasn't strong enough. She was a pretty weak woman in body and mind about that time. But from the moment I told her, and she knew, not only that you loved her, but were willing to say so, she began to mend. And how she did talk about you, and how she did long that the two ships might come together again! She kept asking me what I thought about the condition of your vessel, and whether it would be likely to sink if a storm came on. I could not help thinking that, as far as I knew anything about ships, you'd be likely to float for weeks after we'd gone down, but I didn't say that to her. Then she began to wonder if you had understood

that she had received your message and was glad to get it. And I told her over and over and over again that you must have heard me, for I screamed my very loudest. I am very glad I didn't know that you only caught those two words."

"Dear girl!" I ejaculated. "And did she send me a message on a life-preserver?"

"You mean to say that you got it?" cried Mary Phillips.

"No," said I. "It floated away from me. What was it?"

"I got up that little scheme," said Mary Phillips, "to quiet her. I told her that a letter might be floated to you that way, and that, anyway, it would do no harm to try. I don't know what she wrote, but she must have said a good deal, for she took a long time about it. I wrapped it up perfectly water-tight. She made the flag herself out of one of her own handkerchiefs with her initial in the corner. She said she thought you would like that."

"Oh, that it had come to me!" I cried.

"I wish from the bottom of my soul that it had," said Mary, compassionately. "It would have done you a lot of good on that lonely ship."

"Instead of which," observed Captain Guy, "some shark probably swallowed it, and little good it did him."

"It put a lot of affection and consideration into him," said Mary, a little brusquely, "and there are other creatures connected with the sea who wouldn't be hurt by that sort of thing."

"There's a shot into me!" cried the captain. "Don't do it again. I cry quarter!"

"I must go," I said, rising. "I can wait no longer."

"Well," said Mary, "you may not be much too soon, if you go slowly."

"But before I go," I said, "tell me this: Why did she not send me some word from Lisbon? Why did she not give Captain Stearns a line on a piece of paper, or some message?"

"A line! a message!" exclaimed Mary. "She sent you a note—she sent you a dozen messages by Captain Stearns."

"And I'll wager a month's pay," said Captain Guy, "that he never delivered one of them."

"He gave me no note," I cried.

"It's in the pocket of his pea-jacket now," said Captain Chesters.

"He did deliver some messages," I said, "after I questioned him, but they were such as these: 'Keep up a good heart.' 'Everything's bound to be right in the end.' 'The last to get back gets the heartiest welcome.' Now, anybody could have sent such words as those."

"Upon my word," cried Mary Phillips, "those were the messages I sent. I remember particularly the one about the last one back and the heartiest welcome."

"Confound that Stearns!" cried Captain Guy. "What did he mean by giving all his attention to you, and none to the lady he was sent for to see?"

"Good-by, Mrs. Chesters," I said, taking her by the hand. "I can never thank you enough for what you have done for her and for me. But how you could leave her I really do not understand."

"Well," said Mary, coloring a little, "I can scarcely

understand it myself. But that man would have it so, and he's terribly obstinate. But I don't feel that I've left her. She's in the best of hands, and I see her nearly every day. Here's her address, and when you meet her, Mr. Rockwell, you'll find that in every way I've told you truly."

I took a hearty leave of Captain Guy, shook Mary by the hand once more, rushed down-stairs, roused the sleeping cabby, and, glancing at the card, ordered him to gallop to 9 Ravisdock Terrace, Parmley Square.

I do not know how I got into the house, what I said or what I asked, or whether the family had had their breakfast or not. But the moment my eyes fell upon my beloved Bertha I knew that in everything Mary Phillips had told me truly. She came into the room with beaming eyes and both hands extended. With outstretched arms I rushed to meet her, and folded her to my breast. This time there was no one to object. For some moments we were speechless with joyful emotion. But there was no need of our saying anything, no need of statements or explanations. Mary Phillips had attended to all that.

When we had cooled down to the point of speech, I was surprised to find that I had been expected, that Bertha knew I was coming. When Mary Phillips had left me to prepare my breakfast, she had sent a message to Bertha, and then she had detained me until she thought it had been received and Bertha was prepared to meet me.

"I did not want any slips or misses," she said, when she explained the matter to me afterwards. "I don't want to say anything about your personal appearance,

Mr. Rockwell, but there are plenty of servants in London who, if they hadn't had their orders, would shut the door in the face of a much less wild-eyed person than you were, sir, that morning."

Bertha and I were married in London, and two weeks afterwards we returned to America in the new ship *Glaucus*, commanded by Captain Guy Chesters and his wife.

Our marriage in England instead of in America was largely due to the influence of Mary Phillips, who thought it would be much safer and more prudent for us to be married before we again undertook the risks of a sea voyage.

"Nobody knows what may happen on the ocean," she said. "But if you're once fairly married, that much is accomplished, anyway."

Our choice of a sailing-vessel in which to make the passage was due in a great part to our desire to keep company as long as possible with Captain Chesters and his wife, to whom we truly believed we owed each other.

When we reached New York, and Bertha and I were about to start for the Catskill Mountains, where we proposed to spend the rest of the summer, we took leave of Captain Guy and his wife with warmest expressions of friendship, with plans for meeting again.

Everything seemed to have turned out in the best possible way. We had each other, and Mary Phillips had some one to manage. We should have been grieved if we had been obliged to leave her without occupation.

At the moment of parting I drew her aside. "Mary," I said, "we have had some strange experiences together, and I shall never forget them."

"Nor shall I, sir," she answered. "Some of them were so harrowing and close-shaved. Such heart-breaking disappointments I never had. The worst of all was when you threw that rope clean over our ship without holding on to your end of it. I had been dead sure that the rope was going to bring us all together."

"That was a terrible mishap," I answered. "What did Bertha think of it?"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mary Phillips, "she wasn't on deck, and she never knew anything about it. When I am nursing up a love-match I don't mention that sort of thing!"

ON THE TRAINING OF PARENTS

ON THE TRAINING OF PARENTS

FORTY or fifty years ago, when the middle-aged and old people of the present day were children or young people, the parent occupied a position in the family so entirely different from that in which we find him to-day that the subject of his training was not perhaps of sufficient importance to receive attention from those engaged in the promotion of education. The training of the child by the parent, both as a necessary element in the formation of its character and as a preparation for its education in the schools, was then considered the only branch of family instruction and discipline to which the thought and the assistance of workers in social reform should be given.

But now that there has been such a change, especially in the United States, in the constitution of the family, when the child has taken into its own hands that authority which was once the prerogative of the parent, it is time we should recognize the altered condition of things, and give to the children of the present day that assistance and counsel in the government and judicious training of their parents which was once so freely offered to the latter when their off-

spring held a subordinate position in the family and household.

Since this radical change in the organization of the family a great responsibility has fallen upon the child. It finds itself in a position far more difficult than that previously held by the parent. It has upon its hands not a young and tender being, with mind unformed and disposition capable, in ordinary cases, of being easily moulded and directed, but two persons with minds and dispositions matured, and often set and hardened, whose currents of thought run in such well-worn channels, and whose judgments are so biased and prejudiced in favor of this or that line of conduct, that the labor and annoyance of their proper training is frequently evaded, and the parents are remanded to the position of providers of necessities, without any effort on the part of the child to assist them to adapt themselves to their new condition.

Not only has the child of the present day the obvious difficulties of its position to contend with, but it has no traditions to fall back upon for counsel and support. The condition of family affairs under consideration did not exist to any considerable extent before the middle of the present century, and there are no available records of the government of the parent by the child. Neither can it look to other parts of the world for examples of successful filial administration. Nowhere but in our own country can this state of things be said to prevail. It is necessary, therefore, that those who are able to do so should step forward in aid of the child, as they formerly aided the parent, and see to it, as far as possible, that the latter receives the training which will enable him properly

to perform the duties of the novel position which he has been called upon to fill. It is an injustice to millions of our citizens that the literature of the country contains nothing on this subject.

Whether it be done properly or improperly, the training of which we speak generally begins about the fifth or sixth year of parentage, although in cases where there happens to be but one trainer it often begins much earlier. But in these first years of filial rule the discipline is necessarily irregular and spasmodic, and it is not until the fourteenth or fifteenth year of his parental life that a man is generally enabled to understand what is expected of him by his offspring, and what line of conduct he must pursue in order to meet their views. It is, therefore, to the young people who have lived beyond their first decade that the great work of parent-training really belongs, and it is to them that we should offer our suggestions and advice.

It should be considered that this revolution in the government of the family was not one of force. The father and the mother were not hurled from their position and authority by the superior power of the child, but these positions have been willingly abdicated by the former, and promptly and unhesitatingly accepted by the latter. To the child, then, belongs none of the rights of the conqueror. Its subjects have voluntarily placed themselves under its rule, and by this act they have acquired a right to consideration and kindly sympathy which should never be forgotten by their youthful preceptors and directors. In his present position the parent has not only much to learn, but much to unlearn, and while the child is endeavoring to indicate to him the path in which he

should walk, it should remember that the feet of father or mother are often entirely unaccustomed to the peculiar pedestrianism now imposed upon them, and that allowance should be made for the frequent slips and trips, and even falls, which may happen to them. There is but little doubt that severity is used too frequently in the education of parents. More is expected of them than should be expected of any class of people whose duties and obligations have never been systematically defined and codified. The parent who may be most anxious to fulfil the wishes of his offspring, and conduct himself in such manner as will meet the approval of the child, must often grope in the dark.

It is therefore not only necessary to the peace and tranquillity of the family that his duties should be defined as clearly as possible, but this assistance is due to him as a mark of that filial affection which should not be permitted entirely to die out simply because the parent has voluntarily assumed a position of inferiority and subjection. It is obvious, then, that it is the duty of the child to find out what it really wants, and then to make these wants clear and distinct to the parents. How many instances there are of a father and mother who spend hours, days, and even longer periods, in endeavoring to discover what it is that will satisfy the cravings of their child, and give them that position in its esteem which they are so desirous to hold. This is asking too much of the parent, and there are few whose mental vigor will long hold out when they are subjected, not only to the performance of onerous duties, but to the anxiety and vexation consequent upon the difficult task of discovering what those duties are.

ON THE TRAINING OF PARENTS

Among the most forcible reasons why the rule of the child over the parent should be tempered by kind consideration is the high degree of respect and deference now paid to the wants and opinions of children. In this regard they have absolutely nothing to complain of. The parent lives for the benefit of the child. In many cases the prosperity and happiness of the latter appears to be the sole reason for the existence of the former. How necessary is it, then, that persons occupying the position of parents in the prevalent organization of the family should not be left to exhaust themselves in undirected efforts, but that the development of their ability and power properly to perform the duties of the father and mother of the new era should be made the subject of the earnest thought and attention of the child.

It is difficult for those whose youth elapsed before this revolution in the family, and who, therefore, never enjoyed opportunities of exercising the faculties necessary in the government of parents, to give suitable advice and suggestion to those now engaged in this great work, but the following remarks are offered in the belief that they will receive due consideration from those to whom they are addressed.

There can be no doubt that it is of prime importance in the training of a parent by the child that the matter should be taken in hand as early as possible. He or she who begins to feel, in the first years of parental life, the restrictions of filial control, will be much less difficult to manage, as time goes on, than one who has not been made aware, until he has been a parent for perhaps ten or twelve years, that he is expected to shape his conduct in accordance with the

wishes of his offspring. In such cases, habits of self-consideration, and even those of obtrusive self-assertion, are easily acquired by the parent, and are very difficult to break up. The child then encounters obstacles and discouragements which would not have existed had the discipline been begun when the mind of a parent was in a pliant and mouldable condition. Instances have occurred when, on account of the intractable nature of father or mother, the education intended by the child has been entirely abandoned, and the parents allowed to take matters into their own hands, and govern the family as it used to be done before the new system came into vogue. But it will nearly always be found to be the case, in such instances, that the ideas of the parent concerning his rights and prerogatives in the family have been allowed to grow and take root to an extent entirely incompatible with easy removal.

The neglect of early opportunities of assuming control by the child who first enables a married couple to call themselves parents, is not only often detrimental to its own chances of holding the domestic reins, but it also trammels, to a great extent, the actions of succeeding children. But no youngster, no matter how many brothers and sisters may have preceded it, or to what extent these may have allowed the parents to have their own way, need ever despair of assuming the control which the others have allowed to elude their grasp. It is not at all uncommon for the youngest child of a large family to be able to step to the front and show to the others how a parent may be guided and regulated by the exercise of firm will and determined action.

ON THE TRAINING OF PARENTS

If, as has been asserted, parental training is begun early enough, the child will find its task an easy one, and little advice will be needed by it, but in the case of delayed action there is one point which should be kept in mind, and that is that sudden and violent measures should, as far as possible, be avoided.

In times gone by it was the custom of many parents, when offended by a child, to administer a box to the culprit's ear. An unexpected incident of this kind was apt to cause a sudden and tremendous change in the mental action of the young person boxed. His views of life, his recollections of the past, his aspirations for the future, his ideas of nature, of art, of the pursuit of happiness, were all merged and blended into one overwhelming sensation. For the moment he knew nothing on earth but the fact that he had been boxed. From this point the comprehension of his own status among created things, his understanding of surrounding circumstances and of cosmic entities in general, had to begin anew. Whether he continued to be the same boy as before, or, diverging one way or the other, became a better or a worse one, was a result not to be predetermined.

It is not to be supposed, however, that any ordinary child will undertake to box the ears of an ordinary parent, for the result in such a case might interfere with the whole course of training then in progress; but there is a mental box, quite as sudden in its action and as astounding in its effect upon the boxee as an actual physical blow, and it is no uncommon thing for a child to administer such a form of correction. But the practice is now as dangerous as it used to be, and as uncertain of good result, and it

is earnestly urged upon the youth of the age to abolish it altogether. If a parent cannot be turned from the error of his ways by any other means than by a shock of this kind, it would be better, if the thing be possible, to give him into the charge of some children other than his own, and let them see what they can do with him.

We do not propose to liken a human parent to an animal so unintelligent as a horse. But there are times when a child would find it to his advantage, and to that of his progenitor, to treat the latter in the same manner as a sensible and considerate man treats a nervous horse. An animal of this kind, when he sees by the roadside an obtrusive object with which he is not acquainted, is apt to imagine it a direful and ferocious creature, such as used to pounce upon his prehistoric ancestors, and to refuse to approach its dangerous vicinity. Thereupon the man in charge of the horse, if he be a person of the character mentioned above, does not whip or spur the frightened animal until he rushes madly past the terrifying illusion, but, quieting him by gentle word and action, leads him up to the object, and shows him that it is not a savage beast eager for horse-flesh, but an empty barrel, and that the fierce eye that he believed to be glaring upon him is nothing but the handle of a shovel protruding above the top. Then the horse, if there is any good in him, will be content to walk by that barrel, and the next time he sees it will be likely to pass it with perhaps but a hasty glance or two to see that its nature has not changed, and, in time, he will learn that barrels, and other things that he may not have noticed before, are not ravenous, and so become a better, because a wiser, horse.

We know well there are parents who, plodding along as quietly as any son or daughter could desire, will suddenly stop short at the sight of something thoroughly understood and not at all disapproved of by their offspring, but which to them appears as objectionable and dangerous as the empty barrel to the high-strung horse. Now, let not the youngster apply the mental lash, and urge that startled and reluctant parent forward. Better far if it take him figuratively by the bridle, and make him understand that that which appeared to him a vision of mental or physical ruin to a young person, or a frightful obstacle in the way of rational progress, is nothing but a pleasant form of intellectual recreation, which all persons should like very much, or to which, at least, they should have no objections. How many such phantasms will arise before a parent, and how necessary is it for a child, if it wish to carry on without disturbance its work of training, to get that parent into the habit of thinking that these things are really nothing but phantasms!

When it becomes necessary to punish a parent, no child should forget the importance of tempering severity with mercy. The methods in use in the bygone times, when the present condition of things was reversed, were generally of a physical nature, such as castigation, partial starvation, and restrictions in the pursuit of happiness; but those now inflicted by the children, acting upon the mental nature of the parents, are so severe and hard to bear that they should be used but sparingly. Not only is there danger that by undue severity an immediate progenitor may be permanently injured, and rendered of little value to him-

self and others, but there is sometimes a reaction, violent and sudden, and a family is forced to gaze upon the fearful spectacle of a parent at bay!

The tendency of a great portion of the youth who have taken the governing power into their own hands is to make but little use of it, and to allow their parents to go their own way, while they go upon theirs. Such neglect, however, cannot but be prejudicial to the permanency and force of the child-power. While the young person is pursuing a course entirely satisfactory to himself, doing what he likes, and leaving undone what he does not like, the unnoticed parent may be concocting schemes of domestic management entirely incompatible with the desires and plans of his offspring, and quietly building up obstacles which will be very difficult to overthrow when the latter shall have observed their existence. Eternal vigilance is not only the price of liberty, but it is also the price of supremacy. To keep one's self above another it is necessary to be careful to keep that other down. The practice of some fathers and mothers of coming frequently to the front when their presence there is least expected or desired must have been noticed by many children who had supposed their parents so thoroughly trained that they would not think of such a thing as causing trouble and annoyance to those above them. A parent is human, and cannot be depended upon to preserve always the same line of action; and the children who are accustomed to see their fathers and mothers perfectly obedient, docile, and inoffensive, must not expect that satisfactory conduct to continue if they are allowed to discover that a guiding and controlling hand is not always upon

them. There are parents, of course, who never desire to rise, even temporarily, from the inferior positions which, at the earliest possible period, they have assumed in their families. Such persons are perfectly safe, and when a child perceives by careful observation that a parent belongs to this class, it may, without fear, relax much of the watchfulness and discipline necessary in most families, and content itself with merely indicating the path that it is desirable the elder person should pursue. Such parents are invaluable boons to an ambitious, energetic, and masterful child, and if there were more of them, the anxieties, the perplexities, and the difficulties of the child-power among us would be greatly ameliorated.

Even when parents may be considered to be conducting themselves properly, and to need no increase of vigilant control, it is often well for the child to enter into their pursuits, to see what they are doing, and, if it should seem best, to help them do it. Of course, the parents are expected to promote and maintain the material interests of the family; and as their labor, beyond that necessary for present necessities, is generally undertaken for the future benefit of the child, it is but fair that the latter should have something to say about this labor. In the majority of cases, however, the parent may, in this respect, safely be let alone. The more he gives himself up to the amassing of a competency or a fortune, the less will he be likely to interfere with the purposes and actions of his children.

One of the most important results in the training under consideration is its influence upon the trainer. When a child has reduced its parents to a condition

of docile obedience, and sees them day by day, and year by year, pursuing a path of cheerful subservience, it can scarcely fail to appreciate what will be expected of it when it shall itself have become a parent. Such observation, if accompanied by accordant reflection, cannot fail to make easier the rule of the coming child. And, in conclusion, we would say to the children of the present day : Train up a parent in the way he should go, and when you are old you will know how to go that way yourself.

A BORROWED MONTH

A BORROWED MONTH

EAST

ALL persons who, like myself, are artists, and all others who delight in the beauties of lake and valley, the grandeur of snowy mountain-peaks, and the invigoration of pure mountain air, can imagine the joy with which I found myself in Switzerland on a sketching tour. It had not been easy for me to make this, my first visit to Europe. Circumstances, which the very slightly opened purses of my patrons had not enabled me to control, had deferred it for several years. Even now my stay was strictly limited, and I must return by a steamer which sailed for America early in the autumn. But I had already travelled a good deal on the Continent, had seen Italy, and now had six summer weeks to give to Switzerland. Six months would have suited me much better, but youth and enthusiasm can do a great deal of sketching and nature-revelling in six weeks.

I began what I called my Alpine holidays in a little town not far from the upper end of Lake Geneva, and at the close of my second day of rambling and sketching I was attacked by a very disagreeable and annoying pain in my left leg. It did not result, so far as I could ascertain, from a sprain, a bruise, or a break,

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but seemed to be occasioned by a sort of tantalizing rheumatism, for, while it entirely disappeared when I remained at rest, its twinges began as soon as I had taken half a dozen steps in walking. The next day I consulted a doctor, and he gave me a lotion. This, however, was of no service, and for three or four days he made use of other remedies, none of which was of the slightest benefit to me.

But although I was confined to the house during this period, I did not lose my time. From the windows of my room in the hotel I had a series of the most enchanting views, which I sketched from early morning until twilight, with an earnest and almost ecstatic zeal. On the other side of the lake rose, ten thousand feet in the air, the great *Dent du Midi*, with its seven peaks clear and sharp against the sky, surrounded by its sister mountains, most of them dark of base and white of tip. To the east stretched the beautiful valley of the Rhône, up which the view extended to the pale-blue pyramid of Mont Velan. Curving northward around the end of the lake was a range of lower mountains, rocky or verdant, while at their base, glistening in the sun, lay the blue lake, reflecting the white clouds in the sky, and dotted here and there with little vessels, their lateen sails spread out like the wings of a descending bird.

I sketched and painted the lake and mountains by the light of morning, in their noontide splendors, and when all lay in shadow except where the highest snowy peaks were tipped with the rosy afterglow. My ailment gave me no trouble at all so long as I sat still and painted, and in the wonderful opportunity afforded to my art by nature I forgot all about it.

But in the course of a week I began to be very im-
atient. There was a vast deal more of Switzerland
o be seen and sketched, my time was growing short,
nd the pain occasioned by walking had not abated
n the least. I felt that I must have other views than
hose which were visible from my window, and I had
yself driven to various points accessible to vehicles,
rom which I made some very satisfactory sketches.
ut this was not roaming in Alpine valleys and climb-
ng mountain-peaks: it was only a small part of
hat brought me to Switzerland; and my soul re-
elled. Could any worse fate befall a poor young
rtist, who had struggled so hard to reach Europe,
han to be thus chained and trammelled in the midst
f the grandest opportunities his art life had yet
nown?

My physician gave me but little comfort. He as-
ured me that if I used his remedies and had patience,
here would be no doubt of my recovery, but that it
ould take time. When I eagerly asked how much
me would be required, he replied that it would
robably be some weeks before I was entirely well,
r these disorders generally wore off quite gradually.
"Some weeks!" I ejaculated, when he had gone.
And I have barely a month left for Switzerland!"

This state of affairs not only depressed me, but it
sheartened me. I might have gone by rail to other
arts of Switzerland, and made other sketches from
otels and carriages, but this I did not care to do. If
must still carry about with me my figurative ball
d chain, I did not wish to go where new tempta-
ons would beckon and call and scream to me from
ery side. Better to remain where I was, where I

could more easily become used to my galling restraints. This was morbid reasoning, but I had become morbid in body and mind.

One evening I went in the hotel omnibus to the kursaal of the little town where I was staying. In this building, to which visitors from the hotels and pensions of the vicinity went in considerable numbers every afternoon and evening, for the reason that they had nothing else to do, the usual concert was going on in the theatre. In a small room adjoining, a company of gentlemen and ladies, the latter chiefly English or Russian, were making bets on small metal horses and jockeys which spun round on circular tracks, and ran races which were fairer to the betters than the majority of those in which flesh-and-blood animals, human and equine, take part. Opening from this apartment was a large refreshment-room, in which I took my seat. Here I could smoke a cigar and listen to the music, and perhaps forget for a time the doleful world in which I lived.

It was not long before I was joined by a man I had met before, and in whom I had taken some interest. He was a little man with a big head, on which he occasionally wore a high-crowned black straw hat. But whenever the sun did not make it absolutely necessary he carried this in his hand. His clothes were black and of very thin material, and he always had the appearance of being too warm. In my occasional interviews with him I had discovered that he was a reformer, and that his yearnings in the direction of human improvement were very general and inclusive.

This individual sat down at my little table and ordered a glass of beer.

I had discovered that he was a reformer.

"You do not look happy," he said. "Have you spoiled a picture?"

"No," I replied, "but a picture has been spoiled for me." And as he did not understand this reply, I explained to him how the artistic paradise which I had mentally painted for myself had been scraped from the canvas by the knife of my malicious ailment.

"I have been noticing," he said,—he spoke very fair English, but it was not his native tongue,—"that you have not walked. It is a grand pity." And he stroked his beard and looked at me steadfastly. "An artist who is young is free," he said, after some moments' reflection. "He is not obliged to carry the load of a method which has grown upon him like the goitre of one of these people whom you meet here. He can despise methods and be himself. You have everything in art before you, and it is not right that you should be held to the ground like a serpent in your own country with a forked stick. You have some friends, perhaps?"

I replied, a little surprised, that I had a great many friends in America.

"It is of no import where they are," he said. And then he again regarded me in silence. "Have you a good faith?" he presently asked.

"In what?" said I.

"In anything. Yourself, principally."

I replied that just now I had very little faith of that sort.

His face clouded. He frowned, and pushing away his empty glass, he rose from the table. "You are a skeptic," he said, "and an infidel of the worst sort."

In my apathetic state this remark did not annoy

me. "No man would be a skeptic," I said carelessly, "if other people did not persist in disagreeing with him."

But my companion paid no attention to me, and walked away before I had finished speaking. In a few minutes he came back, and leaning over the table, he said in low but excited tones: "It is to yourself that you are an infidel. That is very wrong. It is degrading."

"I do not understand you at all," I said. "Won't you sit down and tell me what you mean?"

He seated himself, and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. Then he fixed his eyes upon me, and said: "It is not to everybody I would speak as I now speak to you. You must believe something. Do you not believe in the outstretching power of the mind —of the soul?"

My ideas in this regard were somewhat chaotic. I did not know what was his exact meaning, but I thought it best to say that it was likely that some souls could outstretch.

"And do you not believe," he continued, "that when your friend sleeps, and your thoughts are fixed upon him, and your whole soul goes out to him in its most utter force and strength, that your mind becomes his mind?"

I shook my head. "That is going rather far," I said.

"It is not far," he exclaimed emphatically. "It is but a little way. We shall go much farther than that when we know more. And is it that you doubt that the mind is in the brain? And where is pain? Is it in the foot? In the arm? It is not so. It is in the

brain. If you cut off your wounded foot, you have the pain all the same. The brain remains. I will say this to you: if it were I who had soul-friends, it would not be that every day I should shut the door on my art. Once it happened that I suffered—not like you, much worse. But I did not suffer every day. No, no, my friend, not every day. But that was I. I have faith. But I need speak no more to you. You are infidel. You do not believe in yourself."

And with this he suddenly pushed back his chair, picked up his black straw hat from the floor, and walked out of the room, wiping his forehead as he went. I am not given to sudden reciprocations of sentiment, but what this man had said made a strong impression upon me. Not that I had any confidence in the value of his psychological ideas, but his words suggested a train of thought which kept me awake a long time after I had gone to bed that night. And gradually I began to consider the wonderful advantage and help it would be to me if it were possible that a friend could bear my infirmity even for a day. It would inconvenience him but little. If he remained at rest he would feel no pain, and he might be very glad to be obliged to take a quiet holiday with his books or family. And what a joy would that holiday be to me among the Alps, and relieved of my fetters! The notion grew. One day one friend might take up my burden, and the next, another. How little this would be for them, how much for me! If I should select thirty friends, they could, by each taking a day of pleasant rest, make me free to enjoy to the utmost the month which yet remained for Switzerland. My

mind continued to dwell on this pleasing fancy, and I went to sleep while counting on my fingers the number of friends I had who would each be perfectly willing to bear for a day the infirmity which was so disastrous to me, but which would be of such trifling importance to them.

I woke very early in the morning, and my thoughts immediately recurred to the subject of my ailment and my friends. What a pity it was that such an advantageous arrangement should be merely whim and fancy! But if my companion of the night before were here, he would tell me that there was no impossibility, only a want of faith—faith in the power of mind over mind, of mind over body, and, primarily, of faith in my own mind and will. I smiled as I thought of what might happen if his ideas were based on truth. There was my friend Will Troy. How gladly would he spend a day at home in his easy-chair, smoking his pipe, and forgetting, over a novel, that there were such things as ledgers, day-books, and columns of figures, while I strode gayly over the mountain-sides. If Troy had any option in the matter, he would not hesitate for a moment, and knowing this, I would not hesitate for a moment in making the little arrangement, if it could be made. If belief in myself could do it, it would be done. I began to wonder if it were possible, in any case, for a man to believe in himself to such an extent.

Suddenly I determined to try. "It is early morning here," I said to myself, "and in America it must be about the middle of the night, and Will Troy is probably sound asleep. Let me, then, determine, with all the energy of my mental powers, that my mind

shall be his mind, and that he shall understand thoroughly that he has some sort of trouble in his left leg which will not inconvenience him at all if he allows it to rest, but which will hurt him very much if he attempts to walk about. Then I will make up my mind, quite decidedly, that for a day it shall be Will who will be subject to this pain, and not I."

For half an hour I lay flat on my back, my lips firmly pressed together, my hands clenched, and my eyes fixed upon the immutable peaks of the *Dent du Midi*, which were clearly visible through the window at the foot of my bed. My position seemed to be the natural one for a man bending all the energies of his mind on a determinate purpose. The great mountain stood up before me as an example of the steadfast and immovable. "Now," said I to myself, over and over again, "Will Troy, it is you who are subject to this trouble. You will know exactly what it is, because you will feel it through my mind. I am free from it. I will this, and it shall be so. My mind has power over your mind, because yours is asleep and passive, while mine is awake and very, very active. When I get out of bed I shall be as entirely free from pain and difficulty in walking as you would have been if I had not passed my condition over to you for one short day." And I repeated again and again: "For one day, only for one day."

The most difficult part of the process was the mental operation of believing all this. If I did not believe it, of course it would come to nothing. Fixing my mind steadfastly upon this subject, I believed with all my might. When I had believed for ten or fifteen minutes, I felt sure that my faith in the power of my

mind was well grounded and fixed. A man who has truly believed for a quarter of an hour may be considered to have embraced a faith.

And now came the supreme moment; when I arose should I be perfectly well and strong? The instant this question came into my mind I dismissed it. I would have no doubt whatever on the subject. I would *know* that I should be what I willed I should be. With my mind and my teeth firmly set, I got out of bed, I walked boldly to the window, I moved about the room, I dressed myself. I made no experiments. I scorned to do so. Experiments imply doubt. I believed. I went down several flights of stairs to my breakfast. I walked the whole length of the long *salle à manger* and sat down at the table without having felt a twinge of pain or the least discomfort.

"Monsieur is better this morning," said the head waiter, with a kindly smile.

"Better!" said I. "I am well."

When I returned that evening, after a day of intoxicating delight, during which I had climbed many a mountain path, had stood on bluffs and peaks, had gazed over lake and valley, and had breathed to the full the invigorating upper air, I stood upon the edge of the lake, just before reaching the hotel, and stretched forth my hands to the west.

"I thank you, Will Troy," I said. "From the bottom of my heart I thank you for this day. And if I ever see my way to repay you, I will do it, my boy. You may be sure of that!"

I now resolved to quit this place instantly. I had been here too long, and before me was spread out in

shadowy fascination the whole of Switzerland. I took a night train for Berne, where I arrived early the next day. But before I descended from the railway carriage, where I had managed to slumber for part of the night, I had determinately willed an interchange of physical condition with another friend in America. During the previous day I had fully made up my mind that I should be false to myself and to my fortunes if I gave up this grand opportunity for study and artistic development, and I would call upon my friends to give me these precious holidays, of which, but a little while ago, I believed myself forever deprived. I belonged to a club of artists, most of whom were young and vigorous fellows, any one of whom would be glad to do me a service, and, although I desired on special occasions to interchange with particular friends, I determined that during the rest of my holiday I would, for the most part, exchange physical conditions with these young men, giving a day to each.

The next week was a perfect success. As Martyn, Jeffries, Williams, Corbell, Field, Booker, and Graham, I walked, climbed, sketched, and, when nobody was near, shouted with delight. I took Williams for Sunday, because I knew he never sketched on that day, although he was not averse to the longest kind of rural ramble. I shall not detail my route. The Bernese Oberland, the region of Lake Lucerne, the Engadine, and other earthly heavens opened their doors to my joyous anticipations, provided always that this system of physical exchange continued to work.

The Monday after Williams's Sunday I appropri-

ated to a long tramp which should begin with a view of the sunrise from a mountain height, and which necessitated my starting in the morning before daylight. For such an excursion I needed all the strength and endurance of which I could possess myself, and I did not hesitate as to the exchange I should make for that long day's work. Chester Parkman was the man for me. Parkman was a fairly good artist, but the sphere in which he shone was that of the athlete. He was not very tall, but he was broad and well made, with a chest and muscles which to some of his friends appeared to be in an impertinent condition of perfect development. He was a handsome fellow, too, with his well-browned face, his fine white teeth, and his black hair and beard, which seemed to curl because the strength they imbibed from him made it necessary to do something, and curling is all that hair can do.

On some occasions it pleased me to think that when by the power of my will my physical incapacity was transferred for a time to a friend, I, in turn, found myself in his peculiar bodily condition, whatever it might be. And whether I was mistaken or not, and whether this phase of my borrowed condition was real or imaginary, it is certain that when I started out before dawn that Monday morning I strode away with vigorous Parkmanic legs, and inhaled the cool air into what seemed to be a deep Parkmanic chest. I took a guide that day, and when we returned, some time after nightfall, I could see that he was tired, and he admitted the fact. But as for me, I ate a good supper, and then walked a mile and a half to sketch a moonlight effect on a lake. I will here remark that, out of justice to Parkman, I

rubbed myself down and polished myself off to the best of my knowledge and ability before I went to bed.

When, as usual, I awoke early the next morning, I lay for some time thinking. It had been my intention to spend that day in a boat on the lake, and I had decided to direct my will-power upon Tom Latham, a young collegian of my acquaintance. Tom was an enthusiastic oarsman, and could pull with such strength that if he were driving a horse he could almost haul the animal back into the vehicle, but if a stout boy were to be pushed off a horse-block Tom could not do it. Tom's unequally developed muscles were just what I wanted that day. But before I threw out my mind in his direction I let it dwell in pleasant recollection upon the glorious day I had had with Chester Parkman's corporeal attributes. Thinking of Chester, I began to think of some one else—one on whom my thoughts had rested with more pleasure and more pain than on any other person in the world. That this was a woman I need not say. She was young, she was an artist, and she was a very good friend of mine. For a long time I had yearned with all my heart to be able to say that she was more than this. But so far I could not say it. Since I had been in Europe I had told myself over and over that in coming away without telling Kate Balthis I loved her I had made the greatest mistake of my life. I had intended to do this, but opportunity had not offered. I should have made opportunity.

The reason that the thought of Chester Parkman made me think of Kate was the fact that they occupied studios in the same building, and that he was a

great admirer not only of her work, but of herself. If it had not been for the existence of Parkman, I should not have blamed myself quite so much for not proposing to Kate before I left America. But I consoled myself by reflecting that the man was so intent upon the development of his lungs that his heart, to put it anatomically, was obliged to take a minor place in his consideration.

Thinking thus, a queer notion came into my head. Suppose that Kate were to bear my troubles for a day! What friend had I who would be more willing to serve me than she? And what friend from whom I would be more delighted to receive a favor? But the next instant the contemptibleness of this idea flashed across my mind, and I gritted my teeth as I thought what a despicable thing it would be to deprive that dear girl of her strength and activity, even for a day. It was true, as I honestly told myself, that it was the joy and charm of being beholden to her, and not the benefit to myself, that made me think of this thing. But it was despicable, all the same, and I utterly scouted it. And so, forgetting as far as possible that there was such a person in the world as Kate, I threw out my mind, as I originally intended, toward Tom Latham, the oarsman.

I spent that day on the lake. If I had been able to imagine that I could walk as far as Chester Parkman, I failed to bring myself to believe that I could row like young Latham. I got on well enough, but rowed no better than I had often done at home, and I was soon sorry that I had not brought a man with me to take the oars, of which I had tired.

Among those I called upon in the next few days

was Professor Dynard, a man who was not exactly a friend, but with whom I was very well acquainted. He was a scientific man, a writer of books, and an enthusiastic lover of nature. He was middle-aged and stooped a little, but his legs were long, and he was an unwearied walker. Toward the end of the very pleasant day which I owed to my acquaintance with him, I could not help smiling to find that I had thought so much of the professor during my rambles that I had unconsciously adopted the stoop of his shoulders and his ungainly but regular stride.

The half-starved man to whom food is given eats too much; the child, released from long hours of school, runs wild, and is apt to make himself objectionable; and I, rising from my condition of what I had considered hopeless inactivity to the fullest vigor of body and limb, began to perceive that I had walked too much and worked too little. The pleasure of being able to ramble and scramble wherever I pleased had made me forget that I was in Switzerland not only for enjoyment, but for improvement. Of course I had to walk and climb to find points of view, but the pleasure of getting to such places was so great that it overshadowed my interest in sitting down and going to work after I had reached them. The man who sketches as he walks and climbs is an extraordinary artist, and I was not such a one.

It was while I was in the picturesque regions of the Engadine that these reflections forced themselves upon me, and I determined to live less for mere enjoyment and more for earnest work. But not for a minute did I think of giving up my precious system of corporeal exchange. I had had enough of sitting

in my room and sketching from the window. If I had consented to allow myself to relapse into my former condition, I feared I should not be able to regain that firm belief in the power of my mental propulsion which had so far enabled my friends to serve me so well, with such brief inconvenience to themselves. No. I would continue to transfer my physical incapacity, but I would use more conscientiously and earnestly the opportunities which I thus obtained.

Soon after I came to this determination, I established myself at a little hotel on a mountain-side, where I decided to stay for a week or more and do some good, hard work. I was surrounded by grand and beautiful scenery, and it was far better for my progress in art to stay here and do something substantial than to wander about in search of fresh delights. As an appropriate beginning to this industrious period, I made an exchange with my friend Bufford, one of the hardest-working painters I knew. His industry as well as his genius had brought him, when he had barely reached middle life, to a high position in art, and it pleased me to think that I might find myself influenced by some of his mental characteristics as well as those of a physical nature. At any rate, I tried hard to think so, and I am not sure that I did not paint better on the Bufford day than on any other. If it had not been that I had positively determined that I would not impose my ailment upon any one of my friends for more than one day, I would have taken Bufford for a week.

There were a good many people staying at the hotel, and among them was a very pretty English girl,

with whom I soon became acquainted, for she was an enthusiastic amateur artist, and was engaged in painting the same view at which I had chosen to work. Every morning she used to go some distance up the mountain-side, accompanied by her brother Dick, a tall, gawky boy of about eighteen, who was considered to be a suitable and sufficient escort, but who was in reality a very poor one, for no sooner was his sister comfortably seated at her work than he left her and rambled away for hours. If it had not been for me I think she would sometimes have been entirely too lonely and unprotected. Dick's appetite would generally bring him back in time to carry down her camp-chair and color-box when we returned to dinner, and as she never complained of his defections, I suppose her mother knew nothing about them. This lady was a very pleasant person, a little too heavy in body and a little too large in cap for my taste, but hearty and genial, and very anxious to know something about America, where her oldest son was established on a Texas ranch. She and her daughter and myself used to talk a good deal together in the evenings, and this intimacy made me feel quite justified in talking a good deal to the daughter in the mornings as we were working together on the mountain-side.

What first made me take an interest in this girl was the fact that she considered me her superior, and looked up to me. I could paint a great deal better than she could, and could inform her on a lot of points, and I was always glad to render her such service. She was a very pretty girl,—the prettiest English girl I ever saw,—with large gray-blue eyes, which had a trustfulness about them which I liked very

much. She evidently had a very good opinion of me as an artist, and paid as much earnest and thoughtful attention to what I said about her work as if she had really been a scholar and I her master. I tried not to bore her by too much technical conversation, and endeavored to make myself as agreeable a companion as I could. I found that fellowship of some kind was very necessary to a man so far away from home, and so cut off from social influences.

Day after day we spent our mornings together, sketching and talking; and as for Dick, he was the most interesting brother I ever knew. He had a great desire to discover something hitherto unknown in the heights above our place of sketching. Finding that he could depend on me as a protector for his sister, he gave us very little of his company. Even when we were not together I could not help thinking a great deal about this charming girl. Our talks about her country had made me remember with pride the English blood that was in me, and revived the desire I had often felt to live for a time, at least, in rural England, that land of loveliness to the Anglo-Saxon mind. And London, too! I had artist friends, Americans, who lived in London, and such were their opportunities, such the art atmosphere and society, that they expected to live there always. If a fellow really wished to succeed as an artist, some years' residence in England, with an occasional trip to the Continent, would be a great thing for him. And in such a case —well, it was a mere idle thought. If I had been an engaged man, I would not have allowed myself even such idle thoughts. But I was not engaged, and alas! I thought with a sigh, I might never be. I thought

of Parkman and of Kate, and how they must constantly see each other, and I remembered my stupid silence when leaving America. How could I tell what had happened since my departure? I did not like to think of all this, and tried to feel resigned. The world was very wide. There was that English brother, over on the Texas ranch—he might marry an American girl; and here was his sister—well, this was all the merest nonsense, and I would not admit to myself that I attached the slightest importance to these vague and fragmentary notions which floated through my mind. But the girl had most lovely, trustful eyes, and I felt that a sympathy had grown up between us which must not be rudely jarred.

We had finished our work at the old sketching-place, and we proposed on the morrow to go to a higher part of the mountain, and make some sketches of a more extended nature than we had yet tried. This excursion would require a good part of the day, but we would take along a luncheon for three, and no doubt nothing would please Dick better than such a trip. The mother agreed, if Dick could be made to promise that he would take his sister by the hand when he came to any steep places. But, alas! when that youngster was called upon to receive his injunctions, he declared he could not accompany us. He had promised, he said, to go on a tramp with some of the other men, which would take him all day. And that, of course, put an end to our expedition. I shall not soon forget the air, charming to me, of evident sorrow and disappointment with which Beatrice told me this early in the evening. The next day was the only one for which such a trip could be planned, for,

on the day following, two older sisters were expected, and then everything would be different. I, too, was very much grieved and disappointed, for I had expected a day of rare pleasure. But my regret was tempered by an intense satisfaction at perceiving how sorry she was. The few words she said on the subject touched me very much. She was such a true, honest-hearted girl that she could not conceal what she felt, and when we shook hands in bidding each other good night, it was with more warmth than either of us had yet shown at the recurrence of this little ceremony. When I went to my room I said to myself: "If she had not been prevented from going, I should never have known how glad she would be to go." The thought pleased me greatly, but I had no time to dwell upon it, for in came Dick, who, with his hands in his pockets and his legs very wide apart, declared to me that he had found his sister so cut up by not being able to make those sketches on the mountain, the next day, that he had determined to go with us.

"It will be a beastly shame to disappoint her," he said, "so you can get your traps together, and we will have an early breakfast and start off."

"Now," said I, when he had shut the door behind him, "I know how much she wanted to go, and she is going! Could anything be better than this?"

In making the physical transfers which were necessary at this period for my enjoyment of an outdoor excursion, I did not always bring my mental force to work upon an exchange of condition. Very often I was willing to send out my ailment to another, and to content myself with being for the day what I would

e in my ordinary health. But in particular in-
tances, such as those of Parkman and Bufford, I willed
—and persuaded myself that I had succeeded—that
ertain desirable attributes of my benefactor for the
ay, which would be useless to him during his period
f enforced restfulness, should be attracted to myself.
efore I went to sleep I determined that on the fol-
owing day I would exchange with my brother Philip,
nd would make it as absolute an exchange as my will
ould bring about. Phil was not an athlete, like
arkman, but he was a strong and vigorous fellow,
ith an immense deal of go in him. He was thor-
ughly good-natured, and I knew that he would be
erfectly willing, if he could know all about it, to take
day's rest, and give me a day with Beatrice. And
hat a charming day it was to be! We did not
now exactly where we were going, and we should
ave to explore. There would be steep places to
imb, and it would not be Dick who would help his
ster. We should have to rest, and we would rest to-
ether. There would be a delightful lunch under the
ade of some rock. There would be long talks, and
charming coöperation in the selection of points of
iew and in work. Indeed, there was no knowing
hat might not come out of a day like that.

In the morning I made the transfer, and soon after-
ards I arose. Before I was ready to go down-stairs
was surprised by an attack of headache, a thing
ery unusual with me. The pain increased so much
at I was obliged to go back to bed. I soon found
at I must give up the intended excursion, and I re-
ained in bed all day. In the course of the after-
oon, while I lay bemoaning my present misery, as

well as the loss of the great pleasure I had expected, a thought suddenly came into my mind, which, in spite of my miseries, made me burst out laughing. I remembered that my brother Phil, although enjoying, as a rule, the most vigorous good health, was subject to occasional attacks of sick headache, which usually laid him up for a day or two. Evidently I had struck him on one of his headache days. How relieved the old fellow must be to find his positive woe changed to a negative evil! It was very funny!

In the evening came Dick with a message from his mother and his sister Beatrice, who wanted to know how I felt by this time, and if I would have a cup of tea, or anything. "It's a beastly shame," said he, "that you got yourself knocked up in this way."

"Yes," said I, "but my misfortune is your good fortune, for, of course, you had your tramp with your friends."

"Oh, I should have had that anyway," replied the good youth, "for I only intended to walk a mile or two up the mountain, just to satisfy the old lady, and then, without saying whether I was coming back or not, I intended to slip off and join the other fellows. Wouldn't that have been a jolly plan? Beatrice would have had her day, and I should have had mine. But you must go and upset her part of it."

When Dick had gone I reflected. What a day this would have been! Alone so long with Beatrice among those grand old mountains! As I continued to think of this I began to tremble, and the more I thought the more I trembled. And the reason I trembled was the conviction that if I had spent that day with her, I certainly should have proposed to her.

"Phil," I said, "I thank you. I thank you more

or your headache than for anything else any other ellow could give me."

A sick headache, aided by conscience, can work a reat change in a man. My soul condemned me for aving come so near being a very false lover, and my ind congratulated me upon having the miss made or me, for I never should have been strong enough o make it for myself.

The next day the sisters arrived, and I saw but lit- e of Beatrice, for which, although quite sorry, I was so very glad, and after a day on the mountain which owed to Horace Bartlett, the last man in our club n whom I felt I could draw, I returned to the hotel nd wrote a long letter to Kate. I had informed my iends in America of the ailment which had so frus- ated all my plans of work and enjoyment, but I had ever written anything in regard to my novel scheme f relief. This was something which could be better xplained by word of mouth when I returned. And, esides, I did not wish to say anything about it until he month of proposed physical transfers had expired. wrote to Kate, however, that I was now able to alk and climb as much as I pleased, and in my re- entant exuberance I hinted at a great many points hich, although I knew she could not understand em, would excite her curiosity and interest in the markable story I would tell her when I returned. tried to intimate, in the most guarded way, much at I intended to say to her, when I saw her, con- rning my series of deliverances, and my satisfaction having escaped a great temptation gave a kindly rnestness to my manner of expressing myself which herwise it might not have had.

There were now six days of my Swiss holiday left,

and during these I threw myself upon the involuntary kindness of Mr. Henry Brinton, editor of a periodical entitled "Our Mother Earth," and upon that of his five assistants in the publishing and editorial departments. Brinton was a good fellow, devoted to scientific agriculture and the growing of small fruits, a man of a most practical mind. I knew him and his associates very well, and had no hesitation in calling upon them.

At the end of the month, as I had previously resolved, I brought my course of physical transfers to a close, and it was with no little anxiety that I arose one morning from my bed with my mind determined to bear in my own proper person all the ills of which I was possessed.

I walked across the room. It may appear strange, but I must admit that it was with a feeling of satisfaction that I felt a twinge. It was but a little twinge, but yet I felt it, and this was something that had not happened to me for a month.

"It was not fancy, then," I said to myself, "that gave me this precious relief, this month of rare delight and profit. It was the operation of the outstretching power of the mind. I owe you much happiness, you little man with the big head whom I met in the kursaal, and if you were here I would make you admit that I can truly believe in myself."

The next day I was better, with only an occasional touch of the old disorder, and in a few days I was free from it altogether, and could walk as well as ever I could in my life.

I returned to America strong and agile, and with a portfolio full of suggestive sketches. One of these

was the back hair and part of the side face of a girl who was engaged in sketching in a mountainous region; but this I tore up on the voyage.

WEST

I WILL now relate the events which took place in America, among the people in whom I was most interested, while I, a few thousand miles to the east, was enjoying my month of excursion and art work in the mountains of Switzerland.

On my return to my old associates I had intended to state to all of them, in turn, that I owed my delightful holiday to the fact that I had been able to transfer to them the physical disability which had prevented me from making use of the opportunities offered me by the Alps and the vales of Helvetia; but by conversation with one and another I gradually became acquainted with certain interesting facts which determined me to be very cautious in making disclosures regarding the outreaching power of my will.

No one of my friends was so much affected by my departure for Europe as that dear girl Kate Balthis, although I had no idea, at the time, that this was so. It was not that she was opposed to my going. On the contrary, it was she who had most encouraged me to persevere in my intention to visit Europe, and to conquer or disregard the many obstacles to the plan which rose up before me. She had taken a great interest in my artistic career, and much more personal interest in me than I had dared to suppose. She had imagined, and I feel that she had a perfect right to

do so, that I felt an equal interest in her, and when I went away without a word more than any friend might say to another, the girl was hurt. It was not a deep wound. It was more in the nature of a rebuff. She felt a slight sense of humiliation, and wondered if she had infused more warmth into her intercourse with me than was warranted by the actual quality of our friendship. But she cherished no resentment, and merely put away an almost finished interior, in which I had painted a fair but very distant landscape seen through a partly opened window, and set herself to work on a fresh canvas.

Chester Parkman, the artist-athlete whom I have mentioned, was always fond of Kate's society, but after my departure he came a great deal more frequently to her studio than before, and he took it into his head that he would like to have his portrait painted by her. I had never supposed that Parkman's mind was capable of such serviceable subtlety as this, and I take the opportunity here to give him credit for it. Kate's forte was clearly portraiture, although she did not confine herself at this time to that class of work. And she was well pleased to have such an admirable subject as Chester Parkman, who, if he had not been an artist himself, might have made a very comfortable livelihood by acting as a model for other artists. This portrait-painting business, of which I should have totally disapproved had I known of it, brought them together for an hour every day, and although Kate had two or three pupils, they worked in an adjoining room, separated by drapery from her own studio, and this gave Parkman every opportunity of making himself as agreeable as he could be. His

method of accomplishing this, I have reason to believe, was by looking as well as he could rather than by conversational efforts. But he made Kate agreeable to him in a way of which at the time she knew nothing. He so arranged his position that a Venetian mirror in a corner gave him an admirable view of Kate's face as she sat at her easel. Thus, as she studied his features, his eyes dwelt more and more fondly upon hers, though she noticed it not. This sort of thing went on till Parkman found himself in a very bad way. The image of Kate rose up before him when he was not in her studio, and it had such an influence upon him that, if I may so put it, he gradually sunk his lungs, and let his heart rise to the surface.

He imagined, though with what reason I am not prepared to say, that he could see in Kate's countenance indications of much admiration of her subject, and he flattered himself this was not confined to her consideration of him as a model. In fact, he found that he was very much in love with the girl. If he had been a wise man, he would have postponed proposing to her until his portrait was finished, for if she refused him he would lose both picture and painter. But he was not a wise man, and one day he made up his mind that as soon as she had finished the corner of his mouth, at which she was then at work, he would abandon his pose, and tell her how things stood with him. But a visitor came in, and prevented this plan from being carried out. This interruption, however, was merely a postponement. Parkman determined that on the next day he would settle the matter with Kate the moment he arrived at the studio, or as soon, at least, as he was alone with her.

If he had known the state of Kate's mind at this time, he would have been very much encouraged. I do not mean to say that any tenderness of sentiment toward him was growing up within her, but she had begun to admire very much this fine, handsome fellow. She took more pleasure in working at his portrait than in any other she had yet done. A man, she had come to think, to be true to art and to his manhood, should look like this one.

Thus it was that, although Kate Balthis had not yet thought of her model with feelings that had become fond, it could not be denied that her affections, having lately been obliged to admit that they had no right to consider themselves occupied, were not in a condition to repel a newcomer. And Parkman was a man who, when he had made up his mind to offer his valued self, would do it with a vigor and earnestness that could not easily be withstood.

It was a long time before Chester Parkman went to sleep that night, so engaged was he in thinking upon what he was going to do on the morrow. But, shortly after he arose the next morning, he was attacked by a very queer feeling in his left leg, which made it decidedly unpleasant for him when he attempted to walk. Indisposition of any kind was exceedingly unusual with the young athlete, but he knew that under the circumstances the first thing necessary for his accurately developed muscles was absolute rest, and this he gave them. He sent a note to Kate, telling her what had happened to him, and expressing his great regret at not being able to keep his appointment for the day. He would see her, however, at the very earliest possible moment that this most unanticipated

disorder would allow him. He sent for a trainer, and had himself rubbed and lotioned, and then betook himself to a pipe, a novel, and a big easy-chair, having first quieted his much-perturbed soul by assuring it that if he did not get over this thing in a few days, he would write to Kate, and tell her in the letter all he had intended to say.

The next day, much to his surprise, he arose perfectly well. He walked, he strode, he sprang into the air; there was absolutely nothing the matter with him. He rejoiced beyond his power of expression, and determined to visit Kate's studio even earlier than the usual hour. But before he was ready to start he received a note from her, which stated that she had been obliged to stay at home that day on account of a sudden attack of something like rheumatism, and therefore, even if he thought himself well enough, he need not make the exertion necessary to go all the way up to her studio. This note was very prettily expressed, and on the first reading of it Parkman could see nothing in it but a kind desire on the part of the writer that he should know there would be no occasion for him to do himself a possible injury by mounting to her lofty studio before he was entirely recovered. Of course she could not know, he thought, that he would be able to come that day, but it was very good of her to consider the possible contingency.

But, after sitting down and reflecting on the matter for ten or fifteen minutes, Parkman took a different view of the note. He then perceived that the girl was making fun of him. What imaginable reason was there for believing that she, a perfectly healthy person, should be suddenly afflicted by a rheumatism

which apparently was as much like that of which he had told her the day before as one pain could be like another? Yes, she was making game of the muscles and sinews on which he prided himself. She did not believe the excuse he had given, and trumped up this ridiculous ailment to pay him back in his own coin. Chester Parkman was not easily angered, but he allowed this note to touch him on a tender point. It seemed to intimate that he would asperse his own physical organization in order to get an excuse for not keeping an appointment. To accuse him of such disloyalty was unpardonable. He was very indignant, and said to himself that he would give Miss Balthis some time to come to her senses, and that if she were that kind of a girl, it would be very well for him to reflect. He wrote a coldly expressed note to Kate, in which he said that, as far as he was concerned, he would not inconvenience her by giving her even the slightest reason for coming to her studio during the continuance of her most inexplicable malady.

Mr. Chester Parkman's mind might have been much more legitimately disturbed had he known that during the night before Kate had been lying awake, and had been thinking of me. She had heard that day from a friend, to whom I had written, of the great misfortune which had happened to me in Switzerland, and she had been thinking, dear girl, that, if it were possible, how gladly would she bear my trouble for a time, and give me a chance to enjoy that lovely land which I had tried so hard to reach. And if he had been told that at that very time, as I lay awake in the early morning, the idea had come into my head, although most instantly dismissed, that I should like

to be beholden to Kate for a day of Alpine pleasure, he would reasonably have wondered what that had to do with it.

After I had become acquainted with these facts, I asked young Tom Latham, the oarsman to whom I supposed I had transferred my physical condition on the day after I walked with Parkmanic legs to see the sun rise, if he had been at all troubled with rheumatism during the past few months. He replied with some asperity that he had been as right as a trivet straight along, and why in the world did I imagine he was subject to rheumatism!

Of course Kate was annoyed when she received Parkman's note. She saw that he had taken offence at something, although she had no idea what it was. But she did not allow this to trouble her long, and said to herself that if Mr. Parkman was angry with her she was very sorry, but she would be content to postpone work on the portrait until he should recover his good humor.

When she had retired, that night, she had determined that, if she should not be well enough to go to her studio in a few days, she would send for some of her working materials and try to paint in her room. But the next morning she arose perfectly well.

If, however, she had known what was going to happen, she would have preferred spending another day in her pleasant chamber with her books and sewing. For, about eleven o'clock in the morning, there walked into her studio Professor Dynard, a gentleman who for some time had taken a great deal of interest in her and her work.

She had usually been very well pleased to talk to

him, for he was a man of wide information and good judgment. But this morning there seemed to be something about him which was not altogether pleasant. In the first place, he stood before the unfinished portrait of Chester Parkman, regarding it with evident displeasure. For some minutes he said nothing, but hemmed and grunted. Presently he turned and remarked, "I don't like it."

"What is the matter with it?" asked Kate, from the easel at which she was at work. "Have I not caught the likeness?"

"Oh, that is good enough, as far as it goes," said the professor. "Very good indeed! too good! You are going to make an admirable picture. But I wish you had another subject."

"Why, I thought myself extraordinarily fortunate in getting so good a one!" exclaimed Kate. "Is he not an admirable model?"

"Of course he is," said the professor, "but I don't like to see you painting a young fellow like Parkman. Now, don't be angry," he continued, taking a seat near her and looking around to see if the curtain of the pupils' room was properly drawn. "I take a great interest in your welfare, Miss Balthis, and my primary object in coming here this morning is to tell you so, and, therefore, you must not be surprised that I was somewhat annoyed when I found that you were painting young Parkman's portrait. I don't like you to be painting the portraits of young men, Miss Balthis, and I will tell you why." And then he drew his chair a little nearer to her, and offered himself in marriage.

It must be rather awkward for a young lady artist to be proposed to at eleven o'clock in the morning,

when she is sitting at her easel, one hand holding her palette and maul-stick, and the other her brush, and with three girl pupils on the other side of some moderately heavy drapery, probably listening with all their six ears. But in Kate's case the peculiarity of the situation was emphasized by the fact that this was the first time that any one had ever proposed to her. She had expected me to do something of the kind, and two days before, although she did not know it, she had just missed a declaration from Parkman. But now it was really happening, and a man was asking her to marry him. And this man was Professor Dynard! Had Kate been in the habit of regarding him with the thousand eyes of a fly, never, with a single one of those eyes, would she have looked upon him as a lover. But she turned toward him, and sat up very straight, and listened to all he had to say.

The professor told a very fair story. He had long admired Miss Balthis, and had ended by loving her. He knew very well that he was no longer a young man, but he thought that if she would carefully consider the matter, she would agree with him that he was likely to make her a much better husband than the usual young man could be expected to make. In the first place, the object of his life, as far as fortune was concerned, had been accomplished, and he was ready to devote the rest of his days to her, her fortune, and her happiness. He would not ask her to give up her art, but, on the contrary, would afford her every facility for work and study under the most favorable circumstances. He would take her to Europe, to the isles of the sea—wherever she might like to go. She could live in the artistic heart of the world, or in

any land where she might be happy. He was a man both able and free to devote himself to her. He had money enough, and he was not bound by circumstances to special work or particular place. Through him the world would be open to her, and his greatest happiness should be to see her enjoy her opportunities. "More than that," he said to her, "I want you to remember that, although I am no longer in my first youth, I am very strong, and enjoy excellent health. This is something you should consider very carefully in making an alliance for life, for it would be most unfortunate for you if you should marry a man who, early in life, should become incapacitated from pursuing his career, and you should find yourself obliged to provide, not only for yourself, but for him."

This, Kate knew very well, was intended as a reference to me. Professor Dynard had reason to believe I was much attached to Kate, and he had heard exaggerated accounts of my being laid up with rheumatism in Switzerland. It was very good in him to warn her against a man who might become a chronic invalid on her hands, but Kate said nothing to him, and let him go on.

"And even these devotees of muscularity," said the professor, "these amateur athletes, are liable to be stricken down at any moment by some unforeseen disease. I do not wish to elevate the body above the mind, Miss Balthis, but these things should be carefully considered. You should marry a man who is not only in vigorous health, but is likely to continue so. Now, my dear Miss Balthis, I do not wish you to utter one word in answer to what I have been saying to you. I want you to consider, carefully and

earnestly, the proposition I have made. Do not speak now, I beg of you, for I know I could not expect at this moment a favorable answer. I want you to give your calm judgment an opportunity to come to my aid. On the day after to-morrow I will come to receive your answer. Good by."

During that afternoon and the next day Kate thought of little but of the offer of marriage which had been made to her. Sometimes she regretted that she had not been bold enough to interrupt him with a refusal, and so end the matter. And then, again, she fell to thinking upon the subject of love, thinking and thinking. Naturally her first thoughts fell upon me. But I had not spoken, nor had I written. This could not be accidental. It had a meaning which she ought not to allow herself to overlook. She found, too, while thus turning over the contents of her mind, that she had thought a little—a very little, she assured herself—about Chester Parkman. She admitted that there was something insensibly attractive about him, and he had been extremely attentive and kind to her. But, even if her thoughts had been inclined to dwell upon him, it would have been ridiculous to allow them to do so now, for in some way she had offended him, and might never see him again. He must be of a very irritable disposition.

Then there came up before her visions of Europe and of the isles of the sea, of a life amid the art wonders of the world—a life with every wish gratified, every desire made possible. Professor Dynard had worked much better than she had supposed at the time he was working. He had not offered her the kind of love she had expected, should love ever be

offered, but he had placed before her, immediately and without reserve, everything to which she had expected to attain by the labors of a life. All this was very dangerous thinking for Kate. The fortifications of her heart were being approached at a very vulnerable point. When she started independently in life, she did not set out with the determination to fall in love, or to have love made to her, or to be married, or anything of the kind. Her purpose was to live an art life, and to do that as she wished to do it, she would have to work very hard and wait very long. But now, all she had to do was to give a little nod, and the hope of the future would be the fact of the present. Even her own self would be exalted. "What a different woman should I be," she thought, "in Italy or in Egypt!" This was a terribly perilous time for Kate. The temptation came directly into the line of her hopes and aspirations. It tinged her mind with a delicately spreading rosiness.

The next morning, when she went to her studio, she found there a note from Professor Dynard, stating that he could not keep his appointment with her that day, on account of a sudden attack of something like rheumatism, which made it impossible for him to leave his room. This indisposition was not a matter of much importance, he wrote, and would probably disappear in a few days, when he would hasten to call upon her. He begged that in the meantime she would continue the consideration of the subject on which he had spoken to her, and hoped very earnestly that she would arrive at a conclusion which should be favorable to him, and which, in that case, he most sincerely believed would also be favorable to herself.

When she read this, Kate leaned back in her chair and laughed. "After all he said the other day about the danger of my getting a husband who would have to be taken care of, this is certainly very funny!" She forgot the rosy hues which had been insensibly tinting her dreams of the future on the day before, and only thought of a middle-aged gentleman, with a little bald place on the top of his head, who was subject to rheumatism, and probably very cross when he was obliged to stay in the house. "It is a shame," she said to herself, "to allow the poor old gentleman to worry his mind about me any longer. It will be no less than a deception to let him lie at home and imagine that as soon as he is well he can come up here and get a favorable answer from me. I'll write him a note immediately and settle the matter." And this she did, and thereby escaped the greatest danger to herself to which she had ever been exposed.

Nearly all Kate's art friends had been very much interested in her portrait of Chester Parkman, which, in its nearly completed state, was the best piece of work she had done. Among these friends was Bufford, whose pupil Kate had been, and to whom she had long looked up, not only as to a master, but as a dear and kind friend. Mrs. Bufford, too, was extremely fond of Kate, and was ever ready to give her counsel and advice, but not in regard to art, which subject he resigned entirely to her husband. It was under Mrs. Bufford's guidance that Kate, when she first came to the city from her home in the interior of the State, selected her boarding-house, her studio, and her church. More than half of her Sundays were spent with these good friends, and they had always

considered it their duty to watch over her as if her parents had appointed them her guardians. Bufford was greatly disappointed when he found that the work on Parkman's portrait had been abruptly broken off. He had wished Kate to finish it in time for an approaching exhibition, where he knew it would attract great attention, both from the fact that the subject was so well known in art circles and in society, and because it was going to be, he believed, a most admirable piece of work. Kate had explained to him, as far as she knew, how matters stood. Mr. Parkman had suddenly become offended with her—why, she knew not. He was perfectly well and able to come, she said, for some of her friends had seen him going about as usual. But he did not come to her, and she certainly did not intend to ask him to do so. Bufford shook his head a good deal at this, and when he went home and told his wife about it, he expressed his opinion that Kate was not to blame in the matter.

"That young Parkman," he said, "is extremely touchy, and he has an entirely too good opinion of himself, and by indulging in some of his cranky notions he is seriously interfering with Kate's career for she has nothing on hand except his portrait which I would care to have her exhibit."

"Now don't you be too sure," said Mrs. Bufford "about Kate not being to blame. Young girls, without the slightest intention, sometimes do and say things which are very irritating, and Kate is just as high-spirited as Parkman is touchy. I have no doubt that the whole quarrel is about some ridiculous trifle and could be smoothed over with a few words, if we

ould only get the few words said. I was delighted hen I heard she was painting Chester's portrait, for hoped the work would result in something much nore desirable even than a good picture."

"I know you always wanted her to marry him," aid Bufford.

"Yes, and I still want her to do so. And a little iece of nonsense like this should not be allowed to reak off the best match I have ever known."

"Since our own," suggested her husband.

"That is understood," she replied. "And now, do ou know what I think is our duty in the premises? Ve should make it our business to heal this quarrel nd bring these young people together again. I am xtremely anxious that no time should be lost in oing this, for it will not be long before young Clinon will be coming home. He was to stay away only hree months altogether."

"And you are afraid he will interfere with your lans?" said Bufford.

"Indeed I am," answered his wife. "For a long me Kate and he have been very intimate,—entirely oo much so,—and I was very glad when he went way and gave poor Chester a chance. Of course here is nothing settled between them so far, because, there had been, Clinton would never have allowed hat portrait to be thought of."

"Jealous wretch!" remarked Bufford.

"You need not joke about it," said his wife. "It ould be a most deplorable thing for Kate to marry linton. He has, so far, made no name for himself in t, and no one can say that he ever will. He is poor, nd has nothing on earth but what he makes, and it

is not probable that he will ever make anything. And, worse than all that, he has become a chronic invalid. I have heard about his condition in Switzerland."

"And having originally very little," said her husband, "and having lost the only valuable thing he possessed, you would take away from him even what he expected to have."

"He has no right to expect it," said Mrs. Bufford, "and it would be a wicked and cruel thing for him to endeavor to take Kate away from a man like Chester Parkman. Chester is rich, he is handsome, he is in perfect health, and to a girl with an artistic mind like Kate's he should be a constant joy to look upon."

"But," said Bufford, "why don't you leave Kate to find out these superiorities for herself?"

"It would never do at all. Don't you see how she has let the right man go on account of some trifling misunderstanding? And Clinton will come home and find that he has the field all to himself. Now I'll tell you what I want you to do. You must go to Kate to-morrow, find out what this trouble is about, and represent to her that she ought not to allow a little misunderstanding to interfere with her career in art."

"Why don't you go yourself?" said Bufford.

"That is out of the question. I could not put the matter on an art basis, and anything else would rouse Kate's suspicions. And, besides, I want you afterwards to go to Parkman and talk to him, and, of course, I could not do that."

"Very well," said Bufford, "I am going to see them both to-morrow, and will endeavor to make things

straight between them. But I don't wish to be considered as having anything to do with the matrimonial part of the affair. What I want is to have Kate finish that picture in time for the exhibition."

"You attend to that," said his wife, "and the matrimonial part will take care of itself."

But Bufford did not see either Kate or Parkman the next day, being prevented from leaving his room by a sudden attack of something like rheumatism. He was a man of strong good sense and persuasive speech, and I think he would have had no difficulty in bringing Parkman and Kate together again, and if this had happened, I am very certain that Parkman would have lost no time in declaring his passion. What would have resulted from this, of course, I cannot say, but it must be remembered that Kate at that time supposed that she had made a great mistake in regard to my sentiments toward her. In fact, if Bufford had seen the two young people that day, I am afraid—I am very much afraid—that everything would have gone wrong.

The next day Bufford did see Kate, and easily obtained her permission to call on Parkman and endeavor to find out what it was that had given him umbrage. But as the young athlete had started that very morning for a trip to the West, Bufford was obliged to admit to himself, very reluctantly, that it was probably useless to consider any further the question of Kate's finishing his portrait in time for the exhibition.

When I returned to America, and at the very earliest possible moment presented myself before Kate, I had not been ten seconds in her company before I

perceived that I was an accepted lover. How I perceived this I will not say, for every one who has been accepted can imagine it for himself. But I will say that, although raised to the wildest pitch of joy by the discovery, I was very much surprised at it. I had never told the girl I loved her. I had never asked her to love me. But here it was, all settled, and Kate was my own dear love. Of course, feeling as I did toward her, it was easy for me to avoid any backwardness of demeanor which might indicate to her that I was surprised, and I know that not for a moment did she suspect it. Before the end of our interview, however, I found out how I had been accepted without knowing it. It had been on account of the letter I had written Kate from Switzerland.

In this carefully constructed epistle I had hinted at a great many things which I had been careful not to explain, not wishing to put upon paper the story of my series of wonderful deliverances, which I intended with my own mouth to tell to Kate. It was a subtly quiet letter, with a substratum of hilariousness, of enthusiasm, surging beneath it, which sometimes showed through the thin places in the surface. Of course, writing to Kate, my mind was full of her, as well as of my deliverances, and in my hypersubtlety I so expressed my feelings in regard to the latter of these subjects that it might easily have been supposed to pertain to the first. In fact, when I afterwards read this letter I did not wonder at all that the dear girl thought it was a declaration of love. That she made the mistake I shall never cease to rejoice, for, after leaving Switzerland, I should not have been able, in-

voluntarily and unconsciously, to ward off until my return the attacks of possible lovers.

From day to day I met nearly all the persons who, without having the slightest idea that they were doing anything of the kind, had been of such wonderful service to me while I was abroad, and I never failed to make particular inquiries in regard to their health the past summer. Most of them replied that they had been very well as a general thing, although now and then they might have been under the weather for a day or two. Few of my friends were people who were given to remembering ailments past and gone, and if I had needed any specific information from them in regard to any particular day on which they had been confined to the house by this or that slight disorder, I should not have obtained it.

But when I called upon Henry Brinton, the editor of "Our Mother Earth," I received some very definite and interesting information.

"Everything has gone on pretty much as usual since you left," he said, "except that about a month ago we had a visitation of a curious sort of epidemic rheumatism, which actually ran through the office. It attacked me first, but as I understand such things and know very well that outward applications are of no possible use, I took the proper medicine, and in one day, sir, I was entirely cured. The next day, however, Barclay, our bookkeeper, was down with it, or, rather, he was obliged to stay at home on account of it. I immediately sent him my bottle of medicine, and the next day he came down to the office perfectly well. After him Brown, Simmons, Cummings, and

White, one after another, were all attacked in the same way; but each was cured by my medicine in a day. The malady, however, seemed gradually to lose its force, and Cummings and White were only slightly inconvenienced, and were able to come to the office."

All this was very plain to me. Brinton's medicine was indeed the proper remedy for my ailment, and had gradually cured it, so that when I resumed it after my month's exemption, there was very little left of it, and this soon died out of itself. If I could only have known this, I would have sent it over to Brinton in the first instance.

In the course of time I related to Kate the strange series of incidents which had finally brought us together. I am sorry to say she did not place entire belief in the outreaching powers of my mind. She thought that the relief from my disability was due very much to imagination.

"How," I said, "do you account for those remarkable involuntary holidays of Parkman, yourself, and the others, which were so opportune for me?"

"Things did happen very well for you," she said, "although I suppose a great many other people have had a series of lucky events come into their lives. But even if this were all true, I do not think it turned out exactly as it should have done in a moral point of view. Of course I am delighted, you poor boy, that you should have had that charming month in Switzerland, after all the trouble you had gone through, but wasn't it a little selfish to pass off your disability upon your friends without asking them anything about it?"

"Well," said I, "it may be that, if this affair were viewed from a purely moral standpoint, there was a certain degree of selfishness about it, and it ought to have turned out all wrong for me. But we live in a real world, my dear, and it turned out all right."

THE BAKER OF BARNBURY

A CHRISTMAS STORY

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A CHRISTMAS STORY

IT was three days before Christmas, and the baker of the little village of Barnbury sat in the room behind his shop. He was a short and sturdy baker, a good fellow, and ordinarily of a jolly demeanor, but this day he sat grim in his little back room.

"Christmas, indeed!" he said to himself. "And what of Christmas? 'Thank you, baker, and a merry Christmas to you,' and every one of them goes away with the present of a raisin-cake, or a horse gingerbake, if they like that better. All this for the good of the trade, of course. Confound the trade! I'm tired of trade. Is there no good in this world but the good of the trade? 'Oh, yes,' they'll say, 'there's Christmas, and that's good.' But what is the good of it to me? say I. Christmas day is a family day, and to a man without a family it's no day at all. I'm not even fourth cousin to a soul in the town. Nobody asks me to a family dinner. 'Bake, baker!' they cry, 'that we may eat and love each other.' Confound them! I am tired of it. What is Christmas to me? I have a mind to skip it."

As he said this, a smile broke out on his face.

"Skip Christmas," said he. "That is a good idea. They did not think of me last year. This would make them think of me this year."

As he said this he opened his order-book and ran his eye over the names. "Here's orders from every one of them," said he, "from the doctor down to Cobbler John. All have families—all give orders. It's pastry, cake, or sweetmeats, or it's meat or fowl to be baked. What a jolly Christmas they will have without me! Orders from all of them, every one. All sent in good time for fear of being crowded out."

Here he stopped and ran his eye again over the list.

"No, not all," he said. "The Widow Monk is not here. What is the matter with her, I wonder? The only person in Barnbury who has not ordered either pastry, cakes, or sweetmeats, or fowls or meat to be baked. If I skip Christmas, she'll not mind it. She'll be the only one—the only one in all Barnbury. Ha, ha!"

The baker wanted some fresh air, and as this was supper-time for the whole village, he locked up his shop and went out for a walk. The night was clear and frosty. He liked this. The air was so different from that in his bakery.

He walked to the end of the village, and at the last house he stopped.

"It's very odd," said he to himself. "No cakes, pastry, or sweetmeats, not even poultry or meat to be baked. I'll look in and see about this," and he knocked at the door.

The Widow Monk was at supper. She was a plump little body, bright and cheerful to look upon, and not more than thirty.

"Good evening, baker," said she. "Will you sit down and have a cup of tea?"

The baker put down his hat, unwound his long woollen comforter, took off his overcoat, and had a cup of tea.

"Now, then," said he to himself, as he put down his cup, "if she'd ask me to dinner, I wouldn't skip Christmas, and the whole village might rise up and bless her."

"We are like to have a fine Christmas," he said to her.

"Fine enough for the rest of you," she said, with a smile, "but I shall not have any Christmas this year."

"How's that?" cried the baker. "No Christmas, Widow Monk?"

"Not this year, baker," said she, and she poured him another cup of tea. "You see that horse-blanket?" said she, pointing to one thrown over a chair.

"Bless me, Widow Monk," cried the baker, "you're not intending to set up a horse?"

"Hardly that," she answered, with a smile. "But that's the very last horse-blanket that I can get to bind. They don't put them on horses, but they have them bound with red, and use them for door-curtains. That's all the fashion now, and all the Barnbury folks who can afford them have sent them to me to be bound with red. That one is nearly finished, and there are no more to be bound."

"But haven't the Barnbury folks any more work for you?" cried the baker. "Haven't they shirts or gowns, or some other sort of needling?"

"Those things they make themselves," answered

the widow, "but this binding is heavy work, and they give it to me. The blankets are coarse, you see, but they hang well in the doorway."

"Confound the people of Barnbury!" cried the baker. "Every one of them would hang well in a doorway, if I had the doing of it. And so you can't afford a Christmas, Widow Monk?"

"No," said she, setting herself to work on her horse-blanket, "not this year. When I came to Barnbury, baker, I thought I might do well, but I have not done well."

"Did not your husband leave you anything?" he asked.

"My husband was a sailor," said she, "and he went down with his brig, the *Mistletoe*, three years ago, and all that he left me is gone, baker."

It was time for the baker to open his shop, and he went away, and as he walked home snow-drops and tear-drops were all mixed together on his face.

"I couldn't do this sort of thing before her," he said, "and I am glad it was time to go and open my shop."

That night the baker did all his regular work, but not a finger did he put to any Christmas order. The next day, at supper-time, he went out for a walk.

On the way he said to himself, "If she is going to skip Christmas, and I am going to skip Christmas, why should we not skip it together? That would truly be most fit and gladsome, and it would serve Barnbury aright. I'll go in and lay it before her."

The Widow Monk was at supper, and when she asked him to take a cup of tea, he put down his hat, unwound his woollen comforter, and took off his overcoat. When he set down his empty cup he told her

at he, too, had made up his mind to skip Christmas, id he told her why, and then he proposed that they ould skip it together.

Now the Widow Monk forgot to ask him to take a cond cup of tea, and she turned as red as the bind- g she had put on the horse-blankets. The baker ıshed aside the tea-cups, leaned over the table, and essed his suit very hard.

When the time came for him to open his shop, she id that she would think about the matter, and that might come again.

The next day the sun shone golden, the snow shone very, and Barnbury was like a paradise to the good ker. For the Widow Monk had told him he might me again, and that was almost the same thing as lling him that he and she would skip Christmas to- ther! And not a finger, so far, had he put to any ıristmas order.

About noon of that day, he was so happy, was that od baker, that he went into the village inn to have taste of something hot. In the inn he found a tall an with rings in his ears. A sun-browned man he as, and a stranger, who had just arrived and wanted s dinner. He was also a handsome man, and a llor, as any one could see.

As the baker entered, the tall man said to the inn- eper:

"Is there a Mrs. Monk now living in this village?"

"Truly there is," said the innkeeper, "and I will ow you her house. But you'll have your dinner st?"

"Ay, ay," said the stranger, "for I'll not go to her ngry."

The baker asked for nothing hot, but turned hi and went out into the cold, bleak world. As he close the door behind him he heard the stranger say:

"On the brig *Mistletoe*."

It was not needed that the baker should hear thes words. Already he knew everything. His soul ha told him everything in the moment he saw the sun browned man with the rings in his ears!

On went the baker, his head bowed on his breas the sun shining like tawdry brass, the snow glistenin like a slimy, evil thing. He knew not where he wa going, he knew not what he intended to do, but o he went.

Presently a door opened, and he was called.

"I saw you coming," said the Widow Monk, "and did not wish to keep you waiting in the cold." An she held open the door for him.

When he had entered, and had seated himself be fore the fire, she said to him:

"Truly, you look chilled. You need somethin hot." And she prepared it for him.

The baker took the hot beverage. This much good he might at least allow himself. He drank and he felt warmed.

"And now," said the Widow Monk, seating herse on the other side of the fireplace, "I shall speak plainly to you as you spoke to me. You spoke ver well yesterday, and I have been thinking about ever since, and have made up my mind. You a alone in the world, and I am alone, and if you don wish to be alone any longer, why, I don't wish to either, and so—perhaps—it will not be necessary skip Christmas this year."

Alas for the poor baker! Here was paradise seen rough a barred gate! But the baker's heart was ved. Even in the midst of his misery he could not t be grateful for the widow's words. There flashed o his eyes a sudden brightness. He held out his nds. He would thank her first, and tell her afterrds.

The widow took his hands, lowered her bright eyes, l blushed. Then she suddenly withdrew herself l stood up.

"Now," she said, with a pretty smile, "let me do talking. Don't look so downcast. When I tell u that you have made me very, very happy, you uld look happy too. When you came to me yesday, and said what you said, I thought you were too much of a hurry, but now I think that perhaps u were right, and that when people of our age have rthing important to do it is well to do it at once, in this world there are all sorts of things contin-ly springing up to prevent people from being ppy."

The whole body of the baker was filled with a great an, but he denied it utterance. He must hear at she would say.

"And so I was going to suggest," she continued, at instead of skipping Christmas together, we keep gether. That is all the change I propose to your n."

Up sprang the baker, so suddenly that he overset chair. Now he must speak. The widow stepped ckly toward the door, and, turning with a smile, l up her hand.

"Now, good friend," said she, "stop there! At any

moment some one might come in. Hasten back to your shop. At three o'clock I will meet you at the parson's. That will surely be soon enough, even for such a hasty man as you."

The baker came forward, and gasped, "Your husband!"

"Not yet," said the widow, with a laugh, and kissing the tips of her fingers to him, she closed the door behind her.

Out into the cold went the baker. His head was dazed, but he walked steadfastly to his shop. There was no need for him to go anywhere, to tell anybody anything. The man with the ear-rings would settle matters for himself soon enough.

The baker put up his shutters and locked his shop door. He would do nothing more for the good of trade, nothing more for the good of anything. Skip Christmas! Indeed would he! And, moreover, every holiday and every happy day would now be skipped straight on for the rest of his life. He put his house in order, he arranged his affairs, he attired himself in his best apparel, locked his door behind him, and went out into the cold world.

He longed now to get far away from the village. Before the sun set there would not be one soul there who would care for him.

As he hurried on, he saw before him the parson's house.

"I will take but one thing away with me," he said. "I will ask the good old man to give me his blessing. That will I take with me."

"Of course he is in," said the parson's maid; "there, in the parlor."

As the baker entered the parson's parlor, some one hastened to meet him. It was the Widow Monk.

"You wicked man," she whispered, "you are a quarter of an hour late. The parson is waiting."

The parson was a little man with white hair. He stepped toward the couple standing together, and the widow took the baker's hand. Then the parson began the little speech he always made on such occasions. It was full of good sense and very touching, and the widow's eyes were dim with tears. The baker would have spoken, but he had never interrupted a clergyman, and he could not do it now.

Then the parson began his appointed work, and the heart of the baker swelled as the widow's hand trembled in his own.

"Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?" asked the parson.

"Now for this," quoth the poor baker to himself, "I may bake forever, but I cannot draw back nor keep the good man waiting." So he said, "Yes."

Then it was that the baker received what he had come for—the parson's blessing. And immediately his fair companion, brimming with tears, threw herself into his arms.

"Now," said the baker to himself, "when I leave this house, may the devil take me, and right welcome shall he be!"

"Dearest," she exclaimed, as she looked into his face, "you cannot know how happy I am! My wedding day, and my brother back from the cruel seas!"

Struck by a sudden blast of bewildering ecstasy, the baker raised his eyes, and beheld the tall form of

the sun-browned stranger who had been standing behind them.

"You are not a sailorman," quoth the jovial brother, "like my old mate who went down in the brig *Mistletoe*, but my sister tells me you are a jolly good fellow, and I wish you fair winds and paying cargoes." And after giving the baker a powerful hand-shake, the sailor kissed the bride, the parson's wife, the parson's daughter, and the parson's maid, and wished the family were larger, having just returned from the cruel seas.

The only people in the village of Barnbury who thoroughly enjoyed the Christmas of that year were the baker, his wife, and the sailor brother. And a rare good time they had, for a big sea-chest arrived, and there were curious presents, and a tall flask of rare old wine, and plenty of time for three merry people to cook for themselves.

The baker told his wife of his soul-harrowing plight of the day before.

"Now, then," said he, "don't you think that by rights I should bake all the same?"

"Oh, that will be skipped," she said, with a laugh. "And now go you and make ready for the cakes, pastry, and sweetmeats, the baked meats and the poultry, with which the people of Barnbury are to be made right happy on New Year's day."

THE WATCHMAKER'S WIFE

THE WATCHMAKER'S WIFE

IT was late on a quiet August afternoon that the little yacht *Flippant* sailed into the harbor of a small New England town. The yacht, which was a very small one, belonged to my friend George Crimrose, who had invited me to take a week's cruise with him along the coast. There was no one on board but our two selves, and, in fact, there was neither room nor need for anybody else. Crimrose generally sat at the helm, while I acted the part of a crew and steward. Crimrose cooked our meals.

"If General Washington were aboard," he had remarked, "I might let him attend to the sails and anchor, but I should want to do the cooking myself."

We had been out four days, and were now bound homeward, and after passing the night in the quiet harbor we proposed to start on our southerly course to Boston. Crimrose had intended going on shore to put a letter in the post-office, but as it was past supper-time before we entered the harbor, he concluded to postpone this until morning. We had no small boat, but the yacht, which was sloop-rigged, was so small that we could easily run her up to a pier, or even ground her on a beach. Our sails had been

lowered, anchor dropped, supper cooked and eaten, and pipes smoked. We hung out our lantern and retired to rest. The *Flippant* was really nothing more than a sail-boat, though Crimrose always insisted on calling her a yacht. But there was a little deck cabin divided into two parts, each of which was large enough to satisfy the needs of a tired man. There was a slight breeze from the southeast, and the gentle rising and falling of the boat soon lulled us to sleep.

When I awoke the next morning I knew it must be a fine day, because I could see through the opening of the curtains, which hung at the entrance of my little cabin, the early sunlight upon the water, and I concluded that there could not be any wind at present, for the little vessel was perfectly motionless, and I could not feel the slightest swell nor movement of the water. This was unfortunate, because, if we were to reach Boston at the time we expected, we should need a good wind that day.

I got up and dressed myself, and went on deck. It was indeed a beautiful day and a quiet one, and looking out over the stern, I was surprised to see, instead of the town or the sand-hills in the sides of its little harbor, a wide expanse of water on which there was a slight but well-defined swell. Turning to look behind me, I stood utterly astounded. The yacht was ashore, one half her length lying on a sandy beach. No wonder I did not feel the movement of the sea.

For nearly a minute I stood gazing about me in amazement. Before me was a wide beach, back of that a higher bit of land sprinkled with rocks and coarse shore-grass, and still farther back a wood, principally of pines, which shut out the view beyond. This wood

extended for a considerable distance to the right and left, and then there was the sea again.

Crimrose was a heavy sleeper, and I could still hear his deep breathing. Before awakening him I determined to make some further investigation, and quietly walking forward, I stepped ashore. As I did this I fancied the vessel made a little movement forward, but this I attributed to my excited state of mind. I walked around the bow of the vessel, and the longer I looked at her, the more I was puzzled and astonished at her situation. She was not only grounded, but her forepart was deep in the soft sand.

How this happened I could not conceive. Had she broken from her anchorage and drifted upon this point of land, or island, or whatever it was, she would have grounded broadside to the beach, and perhaps stern foremost. But how she could have gone ashore head on, and with such force as to drive her so deeply into the sand that she stood on her even keel, and all this without shock enough to wake either of us, passed my comprehension. I wanted to think it out before I woke Crimrose, who was such a quick, impulsive man, and so full of reasons for everything that could possibly happen, that he disturbed my methods of quiet ratiocination. I would wait a little, and endeavor to work out the problem myself.

As I stood by the vessel, my eyes fell upon the boom where it touched the lower part of the mast, and there, closely pressing the boom and the furled sail, I saw a crooked piece of iron which I had never noticed before. This was attached to a stout rope which ran upward along the mast, making one or two turns around it. My eyes followed this rope upward

to the masthead, and then above the masthead, and on up, higher and higher, and then, throwing my head backward, my eyes followed the rope still higher and higher until it ended at a balloon in the air above me.

There was but little wind. The balloon was almost stationary, and was apparently not much more than a hundred feet above the ground. From the wicker car which hung beneath it there came no sign of occupancy. I ran along the beach a little way, that I might better look up without stretching my neck, and then I sat down on the beach and quietly laughed to myself. Here was an unheard-of and ridiculous situation, and I was delighted that I had fully investigated and worked out the whole problem before waking Crimrose.

The condition was now easy enough to understand. The dangling grappling-iron of an escaped balloon had caught in the boom of the *Flippant*. With a gentle breeze, which was probably blowing early in the night, the strain at first was very slight, but this strain was continuous and strong, and our cable had parted or our anchor had dragged, and we had been towed bow foremost by the balloon until we had touched this beach, and then slowly and steadily had been drawn forward until the bow of the vessel was so deep in the sand that the balloon could move it no farther, and here we were. Now I would awaken Crimrose.

This experienced navigator was not half dressed before he perceived that his yacht was unnaturally motionless, and it was not two seconds after he had put his head out from between his little curtains that he was on deck gazing wildly about him. In another

cond, bareheaded and barefooted, he had sprung on the sand, and stood by my side. At that instant e *Flippant*, before our eyes, moved forward a foot, it emed to me. This was easy enough to understand. imrose was tall, and round, and plump, and in stepng ashore he relieved the craft of more than two ndred pounds of weight.

I pointed into the air, and glancing upward, Crimse saw the balloon. When he appreciated the fact at this great object hovering above us was made fast a long rope to the yacht, Crimrose's lower jaw fell that it looked as if it were going to drop off, and, th eyes like billiard-balls, he began to feel wildly in s pockets. Then he turned to me and gasped: Give me your knife! Cut that rope."

But my mind had been hard at work on the subject this balloon.

"Don't you do that," I said. "There may be somedy in that car, dead or alive, and if there has been accident, there may be papers or something. We ould not let it blow out to sea and be lost forever."

"What is all that to me?" exclaimed Crimrose, red the face. "It will have the mast out of my yacht in minute. It will work her seams loose! It will ruin r! Where is your knife? I have lost mine."

"Crimrose," said I, "if you cut that rope and let at balloon get away, we may do a great injury. lloons don't float about that way unless something s happened. It won't hurt the *Flippant* to hold it ittle longer, until we make up our minds what is st to do."

"It is best to cut her loose!" exclaimed Crimrose. hat is what we should do."

I put my hand upon his arm.

"Stop," said I. "We can do better than tha First, let us find out whether there is anybody i that car."

Without answering, Crimrose stepped back, put hand on each side of his mouth, and shouted in a hig shrill voice:

"Hello, up there!"

Almost immediately a large felt hat appeared abov the edge of the basket, and after it a face. It wa that of a man with grizzled whiskers and beard.

"Who are you, and what are you about?" shoute Crimrose.

The man put his head a little way over the edge the basket. He seemed very much afraid of falling ou

"Glad to see you," he shouted. "Is that ro hitched tight and strong?"

"Yes," I answered, "you are secure for the present

"But you can't hook on to my boat any longer cried Crimrose. "Do you want to come down? you do, pull your valve-rope and let out your gas."

"I do want to come down," cried the man. "N body ever wanted to come down as much as I do. B the valve-rope is broken. I did let out a great de of the gas, but I can't let out any more now. B don't you think you can get this balloon to t ground? Can't you pull us down?"

"I can bring you down," cried Crimrose. "I wi get my rifle and put some holes in the top of the ba loon, and that will let out the gas quick enough!"

I expostulated. "Don't do that," I said. "Yo might rip a great rent in the silk, so that the ballo would fall suddenly, and the man be killed."

I also thought it likely that in his excitement imrose might hit the man in the car instead of the of the balloon, but I did not think it wise to say s. It was plain to see that a large portion of the had escaped, for the lower part of the balloon ng loose and flabby, and the gas that remained was much more than enough to sustain the occupant the car at his present moderate distance above the th. I thought it not at all impossible that we ght be able to pull down the balloon.

At a short distance from us, at the edge of the her ground above the beach, stood a small gnarled e, cedar or something of the kind, with one of its oked roots making a little loop above the ground. is, I believed, would be strong enough to hold the loon, and in a minute I formed a plan.

Crimrose had gone on board to put on his shoes, while he was doing this I got out a long rope ich had been stowed away on the yacht, and mak- it fast to the grapnel of the balloon, I carried the er end of it to the gnarled tree, passed it under root, and fastened it to the trunk. By this time mrose had reappeared, and I proposed my plan to .

"All right," said he. "Anything, so we get her e from the yacht." And standing on our forward k, he reached up as far as possible, and took hold he balloon rope, and hung upon it with his whole ght. Down came the balloon until Crimrose was is knees.

"Hurrah!" I cried, and loosening the grapnel from boom, I ran to the tree, and pulled the rope rly taut.

"Let go!" I cried, and Crimrose released his hol
The balloon rose into the air, moved over the litt
tree, and then stopped. With the rope under th
root, and a half-turn around the trunk, I found
could easily hold it. Even when the balloon shot u
ward, there was no cry from the car. Its occupa
evidently saw what we were about.

Crimrose was so delighted to see his yacht relieve
from the strain of the balloon that he seemed satisfi
with what had been done, and prepared to exami
his vessel to discover what damage, if any, it had su
tained. But I shouted to him to come to me.

"You pull her down a few feet at a time, and I wi
keep the rope tight as it shortens. Then we sha
soon have that man on solid ground."

Crimrose looked up, shook his head a little, but s
to work with such vigor that it was not long befo
the bottom of the car was but a little above the t
of the tree. I now saw that the tree-branches wou
interfere with the safe descent of the aëronaut, a
making the rope fast to the root, I suggested to Cri
rose that he sit down and take a little rest. I th
got an axe from the yacht, and cut off the tree n
far from the ground. Its roots were all that w
needed.

Crimrose and I dragged away the little tree, a
then we set to work again. When the car was with
a few feet of the ground, I cautioned the old ma
who gazed at us with an expression which indicat
more interest in our proceedings than any other em
tion, not to try to get out until I told him to, for t
balloon might give a jump and jerk the rope aw
from us.

"Oh, don't you be afraid," said the man. "I am ot going to get out until everything is tight and ast."

When the car was as low as we could get it, and verything was tight and fast, the aëronaut, with nuch nimbleness, scrambled over the edge of the asket and approached us, offering each a hand.

"Thanks, both of you, ever so much," he said. "If here is ever anything I can do for you, I hope you ill let me know."

"How did this happen?" asked Crimrose. "What nade you hook on to my yacht?"

"Excuse me one minute, gentlemen," said the man, nd going to the basket, he put his head over the edge nd looked down into it.

"Come, Sarah," he said, "you can get out now."

At this we were treated to a new surprise, for an lderly woman, wearing a black bonnet and wrapped n a gray shawl, put her head and shoulders above he side of the car.

"I don't see any steps," she said. "How do people et out of these things?"

"The best way they can, my dear," replied the nan,—"at least, in a case like this."

"All right," said the old lady, and in a minute she as standing alongside the man.

"This is my wife, gentlemen," said he,—"Mrs. Po- ock; and she is just as much obliged to you as I am or helping us to land."

They were a queer-looking couple. The man was nort and wiry in build, with twinkling blue eyes, nd a line of gray beard under his chin. His wife, norter than he, with her black bonnet, her spectacles,

and gray shawl, looked as little like an aëronaut as could possibly be imagined.

"Indeed, I am obliged," said she, "for the last sixteen hours I have been about as much scared as anybody can be, except when I was asleep. And looking over the edge of that car made me so dizzy that I have been curled up in the bottom until I can scarcely get my joints out straight again."

"But how did all this happen?" I asked. "It seems a very odd thing for you two to go up in a balloon."

"Odd! I should say so," replied the man. "I'll tell you in twenty words just how it happened. But by the way, my dear," he interpolated, taking out his watch, "it is not sixteen hours that we have been in the car, for we were thirty minutes late in starting. You see," said he, "I am a watchmaker,—Sylvester Pocock of Barnville, Massachusetts,—and for a long time I have wanted to test the movements of a watch at different altitudes. Great things might come out of experiments of this kind. At last I got a chance. I made the acquaintance of an aëronaut, and he agreed to take me up with him."

"And me," added Mrs. Pocock, "for I would not let my husband go alone."

"He wanted three persons," continued the watchmaker, "and as Mrs. Pocock might never have such a chance again, I agreed to take her."

"Put it as you please," his wife remarked. "Anyway, I went."

"Well, gentlemen," continued the watchmaker, "you may scarcely believe it, but I tell you that after me and Mrs. Pocock had snugly packed ourselves in

at car, me with three of my best watches in my ckets, and she with everything to make her com- rtable for an hour's sail, which was all we bargained r, that aëronaut—a large man, by the way, and a ttle given, I am afraid, to ardent spirits—actually l out of his balloon just as the rope had been cut. e was waving his hat and leaning far over the edge the car, and, I think, made a grab at something mebody held out to him, when out he toppled, rned a somersault, and came down on his feet, and that instant up we went with a shoot that nearly ok our breath away. I don't believe he was hurt uch, for I could see him running and waving his ms, and then in a short time everything seemed to fading away, and we went on up and up, scarcely owing what had happened."

"Scarcely!" said Mrs. Pocock. "As far as I was ncerned, it wasn't as much as that. I knew nothing all except that that man had tumbled over the ge of the car, and it made me so dizzy even to think looking over that I curled myself up in the bottom, I told you, knowing no more about anything than I hadn't been there."

"I did what I could," said the watchmaker, "but at wasn't much. I knew if I let out the gas, the loon would come down, so I got hold of the valve- pe and let out a lot of the gas, and we came down etty fast. Then I began to think we were coming wn too fast, and I let the valve shut again. At at time we were not much further from the ground an when we were fastened to your boat, and the nd was taking us along slowly. I could see people ow, and a good many of them shouted to us. I

tried to open the valve again, thinking we'd let ou selves down kind of gradual, when the rope brok and that was the end of it. The wind took us alon we not knowing what to do, and at last I thoug of letting out the grappling-iron, and I did it quick as I could, but it wasn't no use. We passe over fences and trees and lots of things it might hav caught on to, but our rope didn't reach low enoug and we went on and on until it got dark and w couldn't see things below us, and as there wasn't an thing else to be done, I thought I might as well t to make myself comfortable and take a nap, for whe daylight came I might need all the strength I ha The fact is, I didn't wake up until I heard you callin to me. Sometime in the night I felt a little sort of jerk which must have been when we hooked on to yo boat, but I didn't know what it was, and I didn't g up to look out, for, to tell the truth, it was a dreadf thing, peering out over the top of that basket int the blackness of the night. I think it likely, whe the night drew on, the balloon sunk more and mo until the grappling-iron got low enough to catch on t your boat, which was a blessed thing for us, gentle men, for where we'd drifted to if we hadn't hooke fast to you, there's no telling."

"But all's well that ends well," said Crimros "And now let us have some breakfast. I suppose yo must be hungry. At any rate, I am."

"Now that my feet's on the ground, I am hungry, said Mrs. Pocock, "for it was in the afternoon whe we went up, and we expected to come down again i plenty of time for supper."

While Crimrose, assisted by Mrs. Pocock and th

watchmaker, prepared the morning meal, I started off to find out, if possible, where we were. I walked along the beach to the eastward, and soon finding myself at the end of the little woods, I went inland and scrambled to the top of a rocky hill, and from this I could plainly see that we were on one of the small uninhabited islands which dot the coast of New England.

At varying distances, but none of them nearer than half a mile, were other islands—I counted five of them altogether. When I made this discovery, I went back to the beach and found breakfast ready. The meal was a very good one. Mrs. Pocock, who evidently was a woman who was in the habit of having her own way, had done a good many things in the way of cooking which Crimrose generally insisted on doing himself. We all began in pleasant humor to discuss the situation.

"I don't know what island this is," said Crimrose, "but, from my knowledge of the coast, I am quite sure that if we take a southwesterly course we shall soon be in sight of land, and then I shall have my bearings. I shall be glad to take you two to Boston with us, and then you can easily go to your home by train."

"But how about the balloon? How are we going to get that back to Barnville?" asked the watchmaker.

Crimrose laughed. "The best thing we can do with the balloon is to get your traps out of her and cut her loose and let her sail to the north pole; and it might be a good idea to put our names on a card in it, and then perhaps in that way at least we might get ahead of any Arctic explorers. I should like the men who

finally discover the north pole to find my name there."

"That is a pleasant fancy," said Mr. Pocock, "but it will not do. Robert Moxham, who owns the balloon, can't afford to lose her. And after his kindness in agreeing to take me up to make my experiments, it would be a pretty mean thing for me to go away and leave his property if there was any way of getting it back to him. I reckon that if we was to cut some slits in the bag that could easily be sewed up again, that would let out the gas, we could pack up the balloon and take it along. Of course we should have to leave the car behind, for that would be 'most too big for your boat."

"Well," said Crimrose, "if you can do all that before I am ready to sail, I don't mind, but I can't wait for you. I have to be in Boston to-morrow night, which is Saturday, for I have very important business on hand next week. The fact is, I am to be married, and this is my last bachelor cruise."

"Married!" exclaimed Mrs. Pocock, taking off her spectacles and looking at him. "That is very interesting."

"Yes, and to the best girl in the world. And now let us go and get the *Flippant* afloat. There will be a good wind in half an hour, or I am no sailor."

We had spread the breakfast-cloth upon the clean sand, and Mrs. Pocock now began to gather up the dishes, while Crimrose walked to the yacht. The tide had already risen, and the little boat was now almost surrounded by water. The watchmaker went toward the balloon with a troubled expression. He would require a good deal of help before he could pull it

down low enough to cut a slit in the upper part, and then it would take a good while to pack it.

I stood looking out over the sea. For the time I forgot the strange chance by which we had been towed by a balloon to this island, the unexpected arrival from the upper air of an addition to our party, and the work to be done in order that we might get afloat and start on our homeward cruise; all was forgotten in the thought that next week Crimrose was to be married to the girl I loved.

The story of my affections can be told in a few words: I had loved Jeannette Collins for a long time, and I had a fancy she knew it, but was not sure, for I had never told her. Often and often had I intended to tell her, but there had always been some reason why I had deferred speaking. In those days I was not a man who always acted with the promptness that his interests demanded.

But when Crimrose arrived upon the scene during the previous winter, he proved to be a man of unusual promptness. Without any hesitation at all he fell in love with Jeannette, and very shortly afterwards offered himself to her. I have reason to know that the matter was not settled immediately. But after a time it was settled, and they were to be married next week. It had not been generally expected that the marriage would take place so soon; but Crimrose had determined upon a wedding trip to Europe, and his plans demanded that this should be begun before the summer was over. As I said before, he was very prompt and energetic in everything he did.

But it was of no use to think of those things then. I had shut my lips tightly and ground my teeth

pretty often during the last six months, and I did it again. Then I went to the yacht to help Crimrose get it afloat. We found this not as easy a task as we supposed it would be. Though Mr. Pocock added his strength to ours, we were not able to push the *Flippant* back into the water in which her stern was already afloat. During our efforts the tide rose considerably higher, and then we were surprised to see that the bow of the yacht did not rise with it.

"By George!" cried Crimrose, "I believe the water is running into her instead of lifting her." And on examination this was found to be true. The *Flippant* was leaking forward. We now all set to work to keel over the yacht, and before long we discovered the damage and the cause of it. A jagged bit of rock, nearly buried in the sand, had been pressed against her bottom by the steady strain of the balloon, until it made a hole a foot and a half long.

This was to us all a doleful sight. Even Mrs. Pocock could appreciate the extent of the disaster. The *Flippant* was an old boat, although Crimrose had always asserted that she was just as good as if she had been built the day before, and I fancy her planks were rotten, for the piece of rock had broken through her bottom as if it had been made of earthenware. Even while we were examining the lamentable fracture, the water was gradually rising and concealing it from our view, and we could not keel over the *Flippant* any farther.

Crimrose, who had been standing half-leg deep in water, now splashed ashore and began to clench his fists and swear.

"Do you know," he shouted to me, "that we can't

ve this island? It is impossible for us to repair
t yacht, and in twenty minutes she will be full of
ter." And turning toward the balloon, he ad-
ssed it in terms which, had the great swaying body
l ears, would have shocked it dreadfully. As it
, it shocked Mr. and Mrs. Pocock.

I am very sorry," said the watchmaker, "that that
loon should have caused your disaster, but, for all
t, I am glad our grapnel caught in your yacht. If
ad not, my wife and I might have floated out to
and been forever lost. As it is, we are all four on
land."

Dry land!" exclaimed Crimrose. "I don't want
e on dry land. I am on my way to Boston, and
in the name of all that's wicked am I to get
re?"

Perhaps some passing vessel may take us off," sug-
ted Mrs. Pocock, quietly.

Passing vessel!" returned Crimrose. "When ves-
pass, they don't pass anywhere near such a villain-
bunch of rocks as this. Confound that balloon!
nebody give me a knife."

The watchmaker rose to the occasion. "There's
use in getting angry, sir," said he, "and it won't
p matters to cut loose the balloon. If there is
thing to eat and drink on board your boat, and if
re is any property there that you wish to keep
n getting wet, I think we ought to wade in and
ng it ashore."

The most sensible thing that has been said yet,"
l Mrs. Pocock to me, and I agreed with her.

n half an hour everything that could be moved
n the yacht had been brought ashore and been

carried up to the sheltered spot near the wood, and Crimrose was sitting on a rock with his fingers in his hair.

"I tell you," he cried, "there was never anything so diabolically unlucky since the beginning of the world. It may be hours and even a day before a fishing-boat or any other craft comes near this wretched island. And what am I to do? I did not even mail my letter to Jeannette last night. She hasn't heard from me since we started, and if I am not home tomorrow, she will be certain to think I am drowned. It will kill her. Yes, sir! It will kill her."

Mrs. Pocock, who was not far away, was much affected by this view of the case. Drawing me aside, she said:

"It seems to me, sir, that this is a pretty bad state of things. As far as living goes, there is nothing much to complain of, and the weather's mild, and we have victuals enough to last us for a week if we are careful. But when we think there is a poor lady on shore expecting to be married early next week, and having every reason to believe that her intended is at the bottom of the sea, it is enough to make anybody's heart ache. Do you know the young lady, sir? I think you must, for you are looking awfully doleful yourself. Is she of a tender disposition?"

I was indeed feeling very doleful, and I was glad to have the opportunity of speaking to one so sympathetic as this good woman. I described Jeannette to her in a way that made her look very steadfastly at me.

"It is a great pity that a woman like that should be weeping for a lost lover, and he safe on this dry

and. Have you known the lady long, sir?" she sked. "I suppose your friend was proud to make ou acquainted with such a lady."

"Make me acquainted!" I exclaimed. "I have nown her for years, and he never saw her until last hristmas."

"I am a person who speaks her mind," said she, fter another steadfast gaze at me, "and if the young oman is all you say she is, it strikes me that it is a ity that somebody else did not marry her before that ther gentleman met her."

"What do you mean by that?" I said quickly.

"The principal thing I mean," said she, "is that I on't think much of him. But I dare say you con- ider I have no right to meddle in affairs that don't oncern me, and so I'll stop it."

I looked in astonishment at the watchmaker's wife. he was certainly a person who meddled with matters hat were none of her business.

The greater part of the day was passed in vain fforts to discover some approaching vessel. We oisted our flag upside down on the mast of the yacht, e hung a sheet from the tallest tree on the edge of he wood; but the day began to close and we saw no ign of life upon the water except the smoke of some istant steamers. The sun was already low when rimrose came hurrying to me with Mr. Pocock.

"This man," said he, "has proposed something hich may be of service. He has noticed, and I hould have noticed it myself if my mind had not een so disturbed, that the wind has veered to the outheast, and he says that that balloon of his will easily arry one person, and that if one of us were to get in

her and put the valve in working order, it would not take long for this breeze to blow the balloon to the mainland. It would be easy enough then to come down and send somebody over here to take us off. If word could be sent immediately to Jeannette, and I could get home by Sunday, things would not be so very bad, after all."

"That's a good idea," said the watchmaker's wife, "and I wonder none of us thought of it before."

"It was of no use thinking of it," said her husband, "until the wind changed."

"Then I suppose the thing ought to be done as soon as may be before the wind changes again," said she. "I should say, Mr. Crimrose, that when you go over, you'll have to leave the balloon wherever you land, to stay there until it is called for, and then you will send some sort of a vessel here to take us off."

"Me!" exclaimed Crimrose. "I can't go in the balloon. I am ever so much too heavy. She wouldn't begin to carry me."

"I don't believe you weigh any more than me and Mr. Pocock," said she.

"I think I do," said Crimrose. "Besides, there isn't as much gas in the balloon as when you came down. Of course it is always escaping. But there is plenty to carry a light person—say Mr. Pocock, and he understands more about balloons than I do, anyway."

"Mr. Pocock!" exclaimed the watchmaker's wife. "I would like you to know, sir, that Mr. Pocock weighs just as much as he and me weighs, for if he goes, I go, for he doesn't go without me. And when I say that there is nothing on earth that would tempt me to get into a balloon again,—for sooner than do

I'd spend the rest of my life here, at least as long
ots and leaves and fish, if we could get any, would
me alive,—you will understand that Mr. Pocock
t going in that balloon. It is so important that
should get over to the mainland just as soon as
can, and as it doesn't matter to the rest of us if
vait here awhile until we can be taken off com-
bly, I should say that you are the man who ought
, and I believe the balloon would carry you just
ell as not. Mr. Pocock and I is short, but we're
."

imrose put his hands in his pockets and walked
rd the beach.

That wouldn't do at all," he said. "A light per-
would be perfectly safe, but it wouldn't carry me."
put my hands in my pockets and walked toward
beach. There was no disguising the fact that I
a light person—at least, a great deal lighter than
rose. The next day was Saturday. Fishing-ves-
seldom started out on Saturday, and it was not
y that any small craft would be sailing as far as
against a rising east wind. Even now Jeannette
be feeling a great deal of anxiety, for Crimrose
told her that he might possibly be back by Fri-
although I had not thought there was any reason
upposing he would be able to do this. Moreover,
ad not sent her the letter, which I certainly
ld have found an opportunity to mail had I been
s place. Even if she had been sure he was safe,
ase was a very bad one, for, if Crimrose did not
back before Monday or Tuesday, the wedding
d have to be postponed, and I could imagine how
nette would feel if her wedding did not take

place on the day for which all the preparations ha
been made. Crimrose should never have started on
cruise like this at such a time. I had told him s
but he was a man who would have his own way, an
I am not at all sure that the desire to get him bac
in good time had not assisted me to make up my min
to go with him. I stood and looked out over th
water, and then I turned to Crimrose, who was als
meditating.

"I think I will go over in that balloon," I said.

He sprang toward me, his face blazing with deligh
"Harry," he cried, seizing one of my hands in both
his, "you are a trump! You are a friend indeed, an
it is just what I should have expected from you. Th
thing is easy enough to do, of course, and I should b
the first man to offer to go if the balloon were fille
with gas, but it won't carry me as it is, and it wi
carry you. And, although I should not have aske
you to do it, I accept your offer with all the gratitud
that one friend can show another."

"Come on," said I, "let us get the balloon in shap
to start. That valve should be put in order."

Crimrose was full of enthusiasm. "I am very sur
there is nothing the matter with the valve, excep
that the cord is broken. If we tie another piece
string to it, you will be all right, and have as muc
command of the balloon as if you were driving a pon
to a cart. I will get some cord and make that righ
in no time."

Mr. Pocock came to me.

"I didn't think you'd be the one to go," said h
"but that is not my affair. I believe the balloo
will carry you, and if you take all the rope you ca

t off of that boat and make the grappling-line longer, haven't a doubt you can catch hold of something as on as you get over land."

The watchmaker's wife came and stood close by e.

"Well, well," said she, "you must have a powerful endship for that gentleman to undertake such a trip r him. You couldn't do more if he was your own other—but perhaps you were boys together?"

"Oh, no," said I, "I haven't known him long, and can't say it is for his sake I am going." I did not tend to make this remark, but it came out very turally.

"Oh!" said she, "it isn't, isn't it? Well, it is bad thing for a young lady expecting to be married t to know what's become of her intended, and per- ps not to see him turn up until the wedding-day's er. But, for all that, I say it would take a pretty ong friendship to make a man risk his life in a lf-filled balloon even for the sake of her peace of nd. If I was you I wouldn't go an inch. I'd stay re until somebody came along and took us off. And er all, it isn't a matter of life and death that the dy's mind should be relieved. Don't go."

"Madam," said I, "you don't understand my feel- gs on the subject, and it is quite natural that you ouldn't, but I assure you that that lady's peace of nd is of the greatest importance to me, and I shall to get over to the mainland and let her know ere is no reason for the apprehensions, which have obably already seized upon her, and which must ow greater and more distressing hour by hour and y by day."

She looked at me, drew a deep breath, and said n more.

"I can't get hold of the valve-cord," said Crimros approaching. "It's broken off too high up. But th won't matter, for I don't believe you'll want to l out any gas. In fact, I think it will be prudent f you to load up with some stones for ballast, so as to l sure you won't go too high. Then, if you find you self getting too low, you can throw out some them."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Pocock. "You think he want ballast, do you?"

The radiant Crimrose apparently did not hear th contemptuous remark. "Before you start," said h "I'll go over there to that tree where I put my wri ing-desk, and add something to my letter to Jeannett The first thing I want you to do, Harry, when yo reach land, is to put that letter in the nearest pos office. Then you can attend to getting a vessel for t Jeannette must be thought of before anybody else."

He came back very soon to where Mr. Pocock an I were looking for suitable stones for ballast.

"How are you going to carry this letter, Harry? said he. "Put it in some pocket where you will l sure it will not drop out, or get wet if there shou be rain."

Before I could answer, Mrs. Pocock spoke. " ought to be sewed up in a piece of oiled silk," sh said, "for if it got even damp, she might not be ab to read it. I've something that will be just the thin It's an oilskin bathing-cap, which I brought in ca there should be too much wind or rain for my bonne Give it to me, and I'll sew it up in a jiffy."

"Thank you very much," said Crimrose, and handed her the letter.

Mr. Pocock now assured me that I need feel no anxiety about those I left behind me. The tide was receding, and he had examined the boat, and found that the water in her had not risen high enough to wet the floor of the little cabin, so he and his wife could occupy one of the compartments that night, and Mr. Crimrose the other, and they would be just as comfortable as if they had been at home.

In half an hour the grappling-line had been lengthened, the ballast put into the car, and everything made ready for me to start. But the watchmaker's wife had not yet finished sewing up the letter in the oilskin cap. Her husband called to her, and she came running toward us.

"Here it is," she said. "And you may get soaking wet yourself, but the letter will be all right. I fastened a string to the bag by which you can hang it around your neck, where it will be just as safe as if it was a watch."

"If you want a good watch," said the watchmaker, "I can lend you one, though I don't know really that anything extra in the way of a watch would be of service to you, not taking any interest in the influence of altitudes on balance-wheels."

I declined his offer, and going to the balloon, clambered into it. The rest of the party came up to me, and shook hands with me most cordially, wishing me a safe and quick journey. The watchmaker's wife was the last.

"You take my blessing with you, young man," said he, "and if ever I hope that anything would be of

good to anybody, I hope that may be of good to you." And I could see tears in her eyes as she pressed my hand. I felt in my heart that she was a good old woman.

They loosened the rope, and as it slipped under the root of the tree I began to rise very slowly. I saw that I had too much ballast in the car, and I threw out some of the stones. Then I went up until the rope with the grapnel at the end of it had been let out to its full length.

"Are you ready?" cried Crimrose, from below.

"All right," I answered. He unhooked the grapnel, and I sailed away, free from every earthly tie.

Clouds were spreading over the eastern sky, but it was still clear in the west, and it seemed to me, as I looked out in the direction in which the moderate but steady breeze was wafting me, that I was slowly drifting into the sunset, and in my present state of mind that seemed a very good place to drift into. I did not care to give more than one look back at the island, because it grated upon my feelings to see Crimrose standing there wildly waving his handkerchief.

On and on I went, never rising so high above the water that I could not have touched it with my grappling-iron if I had let it down, and steadily moving westward. As it grew darker, I strained my eyes to discover any indications of the coast, but I could see nothing before me but the sky and the sea, still touched with the fading yellow and pink.

I now opened the basket which Mrs. Pocock had put into the car, and found that she had provided for me somewhat at the expense of those I had left be-

ind. It contained our only remaining bottle of wine
nd the whole of a chicken, besides a jar of marmalade
hich I thought would be very much missed by
rimrose.

I made a good supper, and determining to follow
ıe example of the watchmaker's wife, I made myself
mfortable in the bottom of the car. There was
thing else to do, for the dark night was now fast set-
ing about me, and when I last looked over the side
the car I could scarcely see the glimmer of the
ater below me.

I hoped that nothing would happen to me, and that
would safely reach land and perform my mission,
ıt I could not prevent the thought coming to me
ıat if I should slowly sink into the sea, or should
sappear into the black sky above me, it would be a
eat relief to a soul troubled without reason, but
ill sadly troubled. I did not sleep much. In fact,
ıe night was passed in a succession of broken naps.
metimes the car swayed disagreeably, and fre-
ıently it would seem to sink suddenly beneath me,
aking me feel as if I were sitting on a chair whose
gs were giving way. Once I awoke with a start,
ıd found that I was wet and that water was splash-
g about me. It took but a second to comprehend
at the car was close to the sea, sometimes brushing
e tops of the waves. Instantly I threw over all the
nes that remained in the car, and as the water
lashed up over me, I for the first time shuddered
th fear. But now I rose clear of the sea, and
ough I sat and peered down with eager watchful-
ss, I did not approach it again for a long time.
ith the first glimmer of dawn I could see the waves

again. They were not very far below me, and turn
ing to see how I could further lighten the balloon,
threw out my basket of provisions. Then I ros
again, but it was not long before I began to settl
down nearer and nearer to the water.

It was plain that the gas was, in some way or th
other, oozing out of the balloon. As the dayligh
became stronger, I was positive that I could see t
the west indications of a line of coast. If I could bu
keep the balloon in the air for only an hour more, i
might carry me to land. The grapnel was a heav
thing. I drew it in, untied it, and dropped it int
the sea. This helped a little, but I soon saw that th
car needed further lightening, and I threw out th
whole coil of grappling-rope. This sent up bot
the balloon and my heart, and as the breeze was no
very much stronger than when I started, I rapidl
approached the land. All desire to melt into the se
or the sky had now disappeared, and I watched th
approaching shore with feverish anxiety. I was draw
ing near to what seemed to be the mouth of a rive
or narrow inlet, but I was also drawing nearer an
nearer to the surface of the sea, and there was nothin
else to throw out.

It was not long before I hung barely six feet abov
the water, and then I saw that the balloon must b
lightened or I should never reach the land alive.
quickly cut five or six of the cords on opposite side
of the car and tied them together; then, clamberin
upon the loop thus made, I cut the remaining cord
and let the car drop. This resulted in a grand ris
into the air, and I did not come down again until
was over the marshy banks of a little river. Th

was not at all a good place to land, for, with the exception of a hummock here and there, there was nothing solid enough for a foothold. As I slowly came down I lowered myself from the loop in which I had been sitting, and suspended myself from it by my hands. Then, as soon as I approached a hummock, I put my foot on it, and gave a spring. This sent me up, and the wind carried me forward, and I covered in my first leap of the sort some twenty or thirty feet. Again and again I repeated this action, sometimes failing to strike a hummock or bunch of grass; but even a kick into the water and mud sent me up a little, and after many efforts and some fruitless splashing I passed the marsh and reached solid ground.

Here my first impulse was to let go of the balloon, but on second thoughts I decided not to release it yet. Before me lay a long stretch of sandy dunes which I must cross, and as I stood, my feet lightly pressing the ground, and the balloon steadily pulling at me so that I could not stand still, I determined to make still further use of it. With a run and a vigorous spring, I cleared nearly a dozen yards. My arms were tired, but the motion was exhilarating. I bounded like a hare or a kangaroo. In a wonderfully short time I had gone over a mile or two of waste land, and saw before me a house, with a man hurrying out of the door.

As I neared the house I made a bound which carried me easily over a fence, and the man stood looking at me in dumb amazement. My arms now began to feel as if they would be torn from my body, and I shouted to him to come quickly to cut the silk in the balloon. My respect for the Pococks made me anxious

to save it,—at least, what was left of it,—if it were possible.

The man comprehended the situation, and as I held back, he ran up and made a long gash in the balloon as high as he could reach, and then he took hold of the rope to help me hold it. In a few minutes the great silken folds were flopping on the ground.

I was nearly exhausted with excitement and fatigue, but the man and his wife gave me a warm breakfast, and I told my tale, frequently interrupted by their exclamations of astonishment. In return, the man, who was a small coast farmer, informed me that he knew the island on which we had been cast, and that if he had anything but a rowboat he would be glad to go out and rescue my companions, but there was no one in the neighborhood who owned a sail-boat large enough for such a trip, except Captain Archibald Wharton, who lived about a mile up the coast. He had a big fishing-boat.

Together we went to the fisherman's house. We found Captain Archie, as he was called, but at first he would not believe the tale I told him. However, when my companion asserted that he had seen me arrive with the balloon, the fisherman was obliged to give faith to that much of the story. And as the rest could be no more fabulous, he expressed his willingness to do what he could to bring in my companions. But his boat was not at home. It had been hired to a fisherman down the coast, who would not return with it until that evening, and then, of course, he could not start out at night. He was opposed to working on Sunday, but he said that if his boat got in in time, he would start out the next day, and would

probably bring my friends to land before nightfall. I had hoped to get a boat to go immediately to the island, but as there was nothing better to be done, I arranged with Captain Archie, paying him a part of his price in advance in order to hold him to his bargain; and then, having done all that I could in this line, I inquired for the nearest railroad station. This was five miles away, but my friend the farmer agreed to take me over in his wagon, also promising to keep the balloon safely until it was called for.

I did not mail Crimrose's letter to Jeannette, for I reflected as it was Saturday and there would be no mails on Sunday, she would not receive the letter until Monday. So I determined to take it to her myself. This would suit me in every way, for my home, as well as hers, was in Boston.

It was about the middle of the afternoon when I reached the city, and at first I thought I would go home to array myself in attire more suitable to the occasion than the rough yachting-suit smeared with the mud of the marsh. But all this would take time, and I went immediately to deliver my letter to Jeannette, and, as I knew she would want to know everything about our mishap, I asked to see her. She came into the room with outstretched hand. If she had been anxious or troubled, it had made her look lovelier.

"What has happened!" she exclaimed, gazing at my untidy figure. "Has there been an accident?"

"Yes," I said, "but nobody has been hurt, and I bring you a letter from Mr. Crimrose."

I took from my breast pocket the oilskin cap of the watchmaker's wife, and removing the string from

around my neck, I handed the package to Jeannette.

"You can rip it open better than I can," I said.

Jeannette laughed. "What a funny little mail-bag!" she said. And before she would even attempt to open it she made me tell her the whole history of our adventure.

I made the narrative as short as I could, touching very lightly upon my homeward balloon trip. Jeannette then opened the bag, saying that when she had read her letter she would want to ask me some questions about myself and the balloon.

I could not sit and look at her read Crimrose's letter. During all the time I had been talking to her there had been growing on my mind the feeling that, after all, it was a pity that I had been able to lighten the balloon. The next day was Sunday, and Crimrose would probably be in Boston that night. He would see her on Monday and Tuesday, and on Wednesday they would be married. I turned away from Jeannette, took up a book, and gazed steadfastly at its pages.

"Two!" she said presently, in a tone of some surprise, and then for a minute I heard nothing but the rustling of paper. Then there was another little exclamation, and I heard the cutting of a second envelope. In a few minutes I heard Jeannette suddenly push back her chair. I looked, and saw her standing, her face flushed, and an open letter in her hand. Then, without looking at me, she quickly turned toward the door and went out of the room.

If Crimrose, instead of adding to the letter he had already prepared, had sent another (which was natural enough, for he must have had a good deal to say),

hat could he have put into his second epistle which ould have caused Jeannette to treat me with such rupt discourtesy?

She may not have comprehended the fact that I ad risked my life to bring her those letters, but she ust have understood that my service was not a com- on one, and nothing her lover could have said to er should have made her forget that at least I mer- ed ordinary civility.

I waited some time, and then I rang the bell and ent to ask if Miss Collins had any further commands r me. The servant soon returned with the message hat her mistress asked to be excused from coming own. Feeling very much like a dog who had been icked out of doors, I went home.

I was angry and hurt, and came to the very sensi- le determination to travel, and separate myself as uch as possible from the causes of my pain and hu- iliation. But I did not start on the next day, as I ad intended, nor did I go on the day following. A ood reason for my delay was my desire to hear some- hing about the party I had left on the island. I ould not go from Boston without knowing whether r not they had been safely brought to the mainland. expected that Crimrose would write or telegraph to ne as soon as he found it possible, but I heard nothing ntil I saw, in an afternoon paper on Monday, a short ccount of the adventure, which stated that Captain Wharton had brought away the desert islanders on Sunday evening. I was quite sure that Crimrose vrote this account, because it was in his style, and contained but a slight reference to my balloon trip, bout which he, of course, knew but little.

The next morning Crimrose came to see me, and explained his not writing by saying that he had been very much pressed for time, and knew that I would see the account in the paper. He did not seem to be pressed for time now, for he made himself comfortable in a large chair and lighted a cigar. This surprised me, for he was nearly always in a hurry, and I asked him if he had already finished the business which had made it so important for him to get back to Boston.

"Oh!" said he, "you mean preparing to be married. The wedding is postponed."

"Postponed!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," said he. "It was simply impossible for me to get ready in the little time I had. You haven't any idea what I have to do. I can do as much in a short time as any man can, but it is ridiculous to attempt the impossible."

"And Miss Collins?" I cried. "What does she think of this?"

"Oh, she does not mind it," said Crimrose. "I don't believe she's ready. Women never are. Anyway, she agrees to the postponement."

"For how long?" I asked.

"For about a week, perhaps, but it isn't quite settled yet. The fact is, Miss Collins is a good deal upset by the dangers to which I have been exposed, and she does not seem to be able to get her mind down to business. Moreover,—and I don't mind saying this to you, as you are an old friend,—she seems to be beset with a desire to ask questions. Never in my life have I passed through such an inquisition. I hate answering questions, and always did. There was not an incident of that wretched adventure that she

id not want to know, and afterwards to find out its auses and effects and everything about it. I suppose his is not to be wondered at, for she is naturally ervous, and it is a very good thing that we agreed to ostpone the wedding. She is not in a state of mind or it now. Twelve o'clock! I had no idea it was so ate, and I have an engagement at half-past."

As there was to be no wedding on the next day, I id not leave Boston. I spent several days in a very npleasant state of mind. There constantly arose ithin me a desire to kill Crimrose, but as there was eally nothing to justify the attempt, I endeavored to nother this desire. It was plain that my friend had o suspicion of my feelings toward him, for on Saturay he called on me, valise in hand.

"Where are you going?" I said, pushing back from y breakfast-table.

"I take the eleven-o'clock train for Quebec," he said. I want some bracing air, and can't wait for it here. need a change, anyway."

"Quebec!" I exclaimed. "But you can't get back y Wednesday."

"Of course not," said he. "Oh, I see. That's postoned again."

"Postponed again!" I cried, rising to my feet.

"Oh, yes," he answered. "The fact is, neither of us ready for it. The engagement is—well—I may say rolonged, or perhaps—well, as you will probably get arying accounts, I will state plainly that the engageent is set aside for the present. Miss Collins is—ell, she has not treated me well. She has put interogations and made statements that a man of spirit annot submit to. Of course I do not wish to say

anything against her, but I cannot marry anybody in the frame of mind in which Miss Collins is at present. All this, of course, is—"

"Crimrose!" I cried, advancing toward him, "are you playing false to Miss Collins? Are you daring to trifle—"

"Stop! Stop!" said he. "Don't work yourself into a passion. It isn't any affair of yours, anyway, but I don't mind telling you, since you are getting so excited about it, that I hadn't anything to do with laying this affair on the table. She put the motion, and as she has ever so many more voices than I have, it was carried. But it is satisfactory all around, and when we reopen the matter we will begin afresh. Good-by. I will see you before long."

I did not answer, for my head was in a whirl. Sometime during the morning I went to take a walk, and I know I did not finish my breakfast. For days I was as a ship which, without compass or rudder or sails, drifts in a calm. I did not know what I did or why I did it instead of doing something else.

At last I had a visit, and this was well, for if no one had come to see me I would have seen nobody. My visitor was the watchmaker's wife, and, at first, I did not recognize her, nor, after we had shaken hands, did I remember her name until she mentioned it.

"I have been trying for a good while," she said, "to find your address so that Mr. Pocock or me could come to see you or write to you. We want to pay you our share of the money you gave Captain Wharton in advance for going after us."

At this it struck me that Crimrose had not offered to pay his portion of said money.

"And more than that," the old lady continued, "we ant to tell you how greatly obliged we are to you r doing what you did and sending a boat for us, and ow thankful we are that you got over safe and sound. could not sleep that night for thinking of you anging under that half-empty balloon. But I don't elieve I would have found where you lived if it had ot been for Miss Collins. I knew her address, for I aw it on Mr. Crimrose's letter, and remembered it."

"And you have seen her!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, yes," said the old lady, looking down in er lap as she smoothed one mittened hand with the ngers of the other. "I have seen her, and had a long alk with her, and have heard all about the breaking ff of the engagement."

"Breaking off!" I exclaimed. "Is it entirely roken off?"

"Oh, yes, yes," answered Mrs. Pocock. "And I am ure it is a great blessing for which everybody ought o be thankful. If she had married that Crimrose an, my very heart would have bled for her. I did ot know him long, but I saw enough of him to un- erstand him through and through. It did not need nything more than to hear what he said when he ound out that I had given you that cold chicken and he jar of marmalade. Goodness! I could have hrown a tea-kettle at him. But it's all right now, 's all right now."

"But Miss Collins," I asked,—"what does she think f it?"

"That's hard to say," answered the old lady. That's pretty hard to say. But of course she's glad he match is broken off, because now she knows Crim-

rose as well as I do. But it's natural enough that she should be a good deal upset,—anybody would be in a case like that,—and I think it is the duty of her friends to go and cheer her up. You, sir, for instance, if you was to go and see her, and talk to her cheerfully, and tell her all about your balloon trip,—that I know she wants to hear about, none of us having been able to tell her anything of it except the starting,—it would do her a lot of good."

"I go to see her!" I exclaimed. "Do you know, madam—" And then I hesitated. But though a comparative stranger, the old lady was so sympathetic and so kind that I went on: "Do you know that she treated me rudely when I was there last, and declined to see me when I left?"

"Oh, don't mind that," said Mrs. Pocock. "Don't mind that. She told me all about that. You ought not to take any notice of it at all. The letters you brought her upset her to a degree that it made her lose control of herself. You see, I—I mean it wasn't expected that she should read her letters when you or anybody was by. You mustn't think of that at all. I know all about it. It wasn't any feeling against you that made her act that way. Go to see her, and you will find out that it wasn't. She will treat you just as polite as ever she did, and it's your duty to go, sir, for I know she looks upon you as one of her best friends, for she told me so herself."

When Mrs. Pocock left me, she urged me, if ever I happened to be near Barnville, to step in and see her and Mr. Pocock. They would be so glad to see me, and the village was not half an hour from Boston.

It was an early hour for a call when, the next morn-

ıg, I presented myself at Miss Collins's door. But I ras admitted, and turning over in my mind every- ıing that I thought would amuse and interest her in ıe story of my adventure without agitating her erves or causing her to think that I was trying to ıake a hero of myself, I awaited her coming.

Jeannette was not at her ease with me, but this ras not to be wondered at, considering how intimate had been with her and with Crimrose. But, as the vatchmaker's wife had told me, she had no un- riendly feelings toward me, and, in fact, apolo- ized for having left me so abruptly when I had called ıefore. It was a sudden nervous attack, she said, and could readily understand that if Crimrose had be- ıaved as badly as he must have done to justify her ıreaking off the engagement, he had probably put ıomething into his letters which had shocked the ıoor girl. It might be that I would yet kill Crim- ose, for a more beautiful woman than Jeannette ıever lived, nor one more worthy to have villains lain in her behalf.

After a little while Jeannette's stiffness wore off, nd I told her everything about my balloon trip. She vas so interested and so beautiful that I did not even mit the washing of the waves in the darkness against he bottom of the car, and my dreadful fears in the ıorning that, even in sight of the land, the balloon vould be too weak to hold me up, and I should sink ıelpless into the sea. There was moisture in her eyes, ıer lips were parted, and she leaned forward to look t me.

"Oh! how could you dare all that?" she said. You must have known the dangers. How did you

have the courage to float out in that way into the dreadful mysteries of the night and the sea?"

I could not help the answer that came to my lips.

"I did it for you," I said.

Slipping thus from the brink of the precipice, down I went.

"It is dreadful," said Jeannette, five minutes afterwards, with tears in her eyes, but half laughing. "You shouldn't have spoken so soon. It seems like—"

"Never mind," said I, checking her. "It could not be helped, and I wish I had spoken a year ago."

"I wish you had," whispered Jeannette.

It was at least half an hour after this that, among all the wonders of this new heavenly world which I had just entered, nothing surprised me more than that she should have been so little surprised when I had opened my heart to her.

"How could I be," said she, "after the letter you brought me?"

"Letter!" I cried. "Did Crimrose—"

"Crimrose!" she said. "What utter nonsense! But I see that you know nothing. I will get you the letter which gave me the nervous shock."

She brought it. It ran thus:

Miss Jeannette Collins.

MY DEAR YOUNG LADY: I am a married woman whose husband, Sylvester Pocock, does business in Barnville, and is known all over that country, and I have been cast away on an island in a way that I haven't time to tell you about, but of which you will soon hear all the particulars. I am in a great hurry, having to write secretly and unobserved, and, without stopping to mince matters, I beg and implore you, with all the earnestness which one woman who knows what true love is can

appeal with to one who I believe doesn't, not having had a fair chance, not to marry Mr. Crimrose—not, at least, until you have a chance to think over things after what I tell you. That feather-bed of a Crimrose is not the man who really loves you. I have so little time that I have to speak strong. He is a selfish brute and loves nobody but himself. Take time to try him, my dear young lady, and you will find that out for yourself. Mr. Elliot, the gentleman who will bring you this, if you ever get it, is the man who truly loves you. I have so little time that I am obliged to put things strong. He doesn't know it, but I have found out that he loves you from the bottom of his heart, that he would cast himself into the middle of the sea to save you from one sleepless night, and, so far as anybody can tell, he may do it. He is going to risk his life to keep you from being worried and anxious.

He is the modestest man and the best friend that I have ever met in all my life, and I say boldly, without caring what happens or what people think of me, that if you marry Crimrose instead of Elliot, you will make a mistake that will bring you years of misery. I can't make this strong enough, for I have n't time and don't know how; but, my dear young lady, I beg and implore you, stop long enough to give your true lover a chance. I have given you warning; look into the matter yourself. Mr. Elliot has loved you for ever so long, and Crimrose never can do it; it isn't in him.

Nobody knows I am writing this, and it may be drowned in the sea with the noble young man who risks his life to take it to you. It is all mixed up, and you may think it's strong, but it comes from the heart of a woman who doesn't want to see any other woman, even a total stranger, make the mistake that you are on the brink of.

Yours in haste,

SARAH POCOCK.

I stood aghast. "And this," I exclaimed, "was the second letter!"

"Of course," said Jeannette.

"And you—knew—"

"I expected—I could not be certain," said Jeannette, demurely. "I had suspected something of the sort long ago, and in a manner had expected—but nothing ever happened."

"Bless that watchmaker's wife!" said I.

On the first day that I could get an hour or two to spare, I went to Barnville, and, without any trouble, found Mr. Pocock's shop. Pocock is a good man, and he had sense enough to stay in the shop while I sat in the little back parlor and talked to his wife. It was a long interview, and very warm on both sides, but she was such an elderly person no one could object to that.

"Well," said she, as I was leaving, and she stood holding me by the hand, "it gladdens my heart to think that there is to be another true, loving couple in this world. And I am sure I ought to feel so, for it is very seldom that a woman has had the chance that I have had of making two men happy."

"Two men?" I asked.

"Yes," said she. "You and Mr. Pocock."

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